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27 JUN 1936



A SHORT HISTORY OF
ANCIENT EGYPT



THE WORKS
of
ARTHUR WEIGALL

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Alexander the Great.



THE GREAT HYPOSTYLE HALL AT KARNAK

[Frontispiece

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

By

ARTHUR WEIGALL

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CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I Some Remarks about Egyptian History, Chronology and Kingship	1
II The Dawn of Egyptian History	10
III The First Three Dynasties	20
IV The Fourth and Fifth Dynasties	34
V The Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Dynasties	49
VI The Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Dynasties	61
VII The Twelfth Dynasty	72
VIII The Thirteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties	88
IX The First Four Kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty : Ahmose, Amenhotpe the First, Thutmose the First, and Thutmose the Second	100
X Hetshepsut and Thutmose the Third of the Eighteenth Dynasty	117
XI Amenhotpe the Second, Thutmose the Fourth and Amenhotpe the Third, of the Eighteenth Dynasty	132
XII Amenhotpe the Fourth (Akhnaton), Smenk- hkere, Tutenkhamen, Ay, and Horemhab, of the Eighteenth Dynasty	148

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
XIII	Rameses the First, Sety the First, and Rameses the Second, of the Nineteenth Dynasty	165
XIV	The End of the Nineteenth Dynasty and the Beginning of the Twentieth Dynasty	180
XV	The Twentieth Dynasty	191
XVI	The Twenty-first Dynasty	207
XVII	The Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth Dynasties	218
XVIII	The Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynas- ties	231
XIX	The Twenty-seventh to Thirty-third Dynas- ties	247
	List of Kings and their Dates	261
	Index	273

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		FACING PAGE
	The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak	
	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
I	Red Pottery Lion	22
	Plait of hair and false fringe found in the tomb of a queen	22
II	King Menkeure of the Fourth Dynasty .	40
	The Pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty Kings	40
III	Statuette of an unknown man	44
	A priest at prayer	44
	The Sheikh-El-Beled	44
IV	Head of Renofer	46
	Figure of an unknown woman	46
V	On the way to the Temple of Dêr el-Bahri, Thebes	68
	The Pharaoh's concubine and her maid .	68
VI	One of ten similar statues of Senusret I .	74
	Princess Ata's Dagger	74
	Princess Khnumet's Diadem	74
VII	Head of a Statuette of Amenemhet III .	82
	Head of a Statue of Senusret I . . .	82
VIII	Statue of Pharaoh Hor-Antuabre . . .	88
	Statue of a Pharaoh found at Abydos .	88

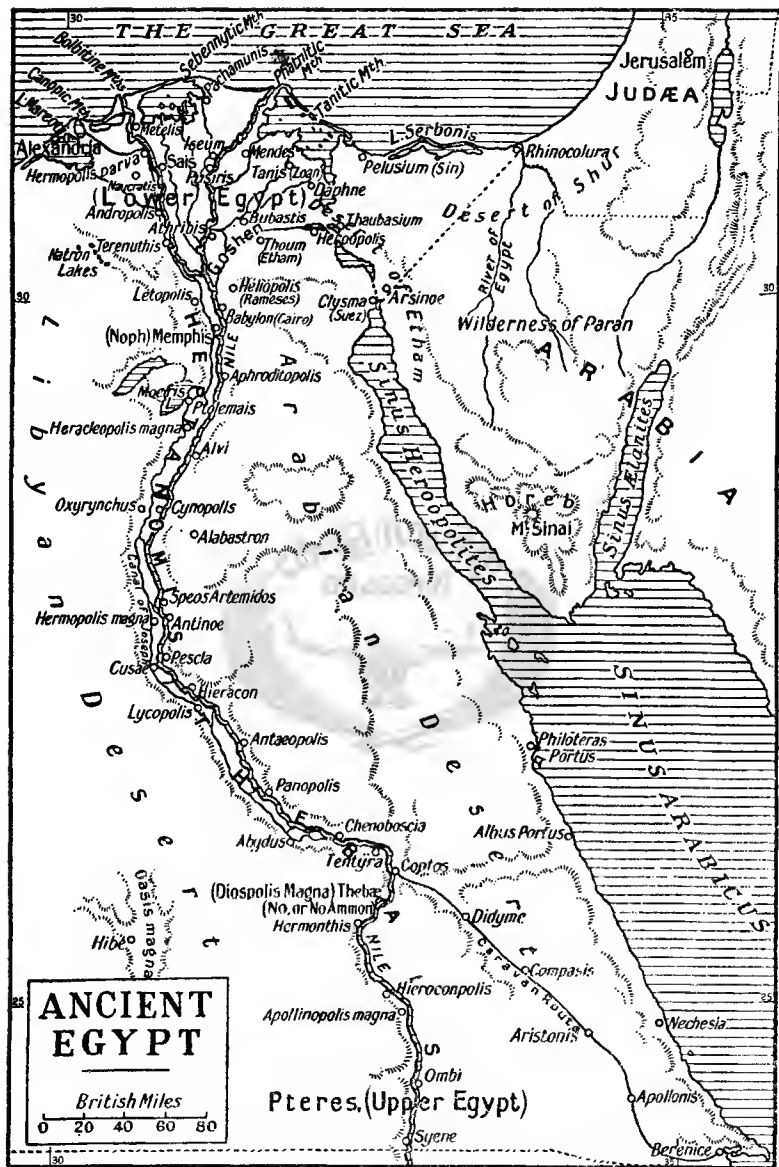
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		FACING PAGE
IX	Statue of the lioness-headed goddess Sekhmet	130
	Two Pillars before the Sanctuary at Karnak	130
	An Alabaster Sphinx of Thutmose III .	130
X	Scene from Queen Hetshepsut's Temple at Dêr el-Bahri	140
	Lion placed in the Temple of Napata by Amenophis III	140
XI	Statuette of an unknown woman	162
	Temple of Luxor	162
XII	Rameses II. Nineteenth Dynasty	176
	Avenue of Ram-headed Sphinxes leading from Karnak to the River Quay	176
XIII	Rameses III leading his son to the gods	186
	Statuette of a Priest of Amen-Re	186
XIV	Statuettes of the gods	238
XV	Luxor	258
	Map of Ancient Egypt	<i>page xi</i>

Publishers' Note

WHILE this book was actually passing through the press, its author's lamented death deprived the world of a great scholar, who was also one of the most popular and illuminating interpreters of Egyptology. Although he did not live to read the final proofs, he had put his last touches to the MS., and had himself selected the illustrations.





27 JUN 1935

CHAPTER ONE

*Some Remarks about Egyptian History, Chronology
and Kingship*

ANYBODY who is beginning to make a study of the long history of ancient Egypt will want to be told at the outset what are the sources from which the knowledge of such a remote period is obtained, and what are the methods by which Egyptologists arrive at the dates of the reigns of all the hundreds of kings—or Pharaohs as they were called—who ruled in turn over this venerable and romantic land.

The historical material is derived chiefly, of course, from the papyrus documents and inscribed objects dug up by excavators, and from the inscriptions upon monuments and the walls of temples and tombs ; and it may be pointed out in passing that the ancient Egyptian writing is now practically as readable as any other ancient script, and that the language and its grammar, syntax and idiom are pretty thoroughly understood.

In the huge national museum in Cairo and in Egyptian collections throughout the world there are thousands of inscriptions which provide some date or tell of some event or give the name of some king or important personage ; while on ancient public monuments or buildings or private tombs there are numerous historical or biographical records. All these are like

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

the pieces in a jig-saw puzzle ; for the writing of a detailed story of the ancient Pharaohs consists mainly of the assembling and marshalling of enormous numbers of isolated facts, and fitting them together so that they make a complete picture.

Fortunately there are various ancient lists of kings which have survived the wreckage, and which serve as a sort of key-plan to the picture. For the early Pharaohs we have the fragments of a great stone tablet, set up in the Fifth Dynasty, upon both sides of which the short annals of the first five dynasties are inscribed ; and luckily the main fragment, now known as the ' Palermo Stone ', is of a size and shape which have enabled the whole tablet to be reconstructed with some degree of certainty.

An important source of information covering the whole period down to about the Seventeenth Dynasty is a document now known as the Turin Papyrus, wherein was a complete list of kings with the exact lengths of their reigns ; but this document fell into hundreds of small, brittle pieces after it was discovered, and it is not certain that the fragments have been put together properly, though in general the sequence of names is fairly clear.

There are also two important lists of kings dating from the Nineteenth Dynasty, one inscribed upon the wall of the temple of Abydos and incorporating all those kings acknowledged by the people of the south, and the other inscribed in a tomb at Sakkara, near Memphis, and giving the names of all the Pharaohs recognized in the north. (Another list, at Karnak, is too much of a jumble to be of much use.)

The Greek historian and traveller, Herodotus, writing in the fifth century B.C., gave a sketch of

Egyptian history which is an interesting mixture of fact and fiction ; and there are other useful references to events in Egypt in various ancient works, including the Bible.

Finally, in the third century B.C. an Egyptian priest named Manetho wrote in Greek a history of Egypt which is now lost ; but two or three later scholars of ancient times copied out a few passages from his work and made lists of the Pharaohs mentioned by him, and these have survived, so that there is a sort of skeleton-history upon which to build.

It was this Manetho who divided the kings into houses or dynasties, calling the earliest group the 'First Dynasty', and so going on through all the succeeding royal lines down to the one under which he lived, which was the 'Thirty-third Dynasty', and which proved to be the last.

But one of the chief difficulties about Manetho is that he gave a Greek form to the Egyptian names, and it is often hard to reconcile his renderings with those derived from the ancient inscriptions themselves ; and modern historians confuse matters by sometimes using these Greek forms and sometimes employing the forms obtained from the direct transcription of the old writing, while the confusion is increased by the fact that different schools of Egyptology use somewhat different systems of spelling.

So much for the sources ; and now a few words of explanation are necessary in regard to the chronology, for there is a good deal of disagreement amongst Egyptologists upon the subject.

The Egyptians used a calendar in which the year was divided into three seasons—*Akhe*, *Pero*, and *Shom*—each subdivided into four months of thirty days.

There were thus a hundred and twenty days in each season, or three hundred and sixty in the year ; and tacked on to the end of these were five extra days which brought the total up to three hundred and sixty-five. But the real year is about three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter days, and unfortunately there was no leap year's day every fourth year to keep the calendar in its correct seasonal position, and thus it dropped back by a quarter of a day each year, just as our own calendar would do if it were not for that February 29th which is slipped in every fourth year. That is to say, it fell behind the proper season by about twenty-five days in every century, and, having passed completely round the seasons, came back to its original position in about fourteen hundred and sixty years.

When the calendar was first invented, probably in 3400 B.C., the Egyptians, who were an agricultural people, naturally decided to begin their calendar-year at the date when the annual Nile-floods began to subside and the first seed could be sown, namely in the middle of October, and there is reason to suppose that the original New Year's Day, the first day of *Akhe*, corresponded actually to October 20th. The second season, *Pero*, therefore began on February 18th, which was a convenient date, because the reaping of the first harvest was traditionally completed about then ; and this gave June 17th as the date for the beginning of the third season, *Shom*—again a convenient date, because it was just about then that the Nile actually began to rise.

But June 17th was an important date in 3400 B.C., because it was on that day that the dog-star, Sirius, was first observed above the eastern horizon before dawn after its annual period of invisibility. The old

Egyptian astronomers had always given great attention to the rising of Sirius, and before the institution of this calendar the learned priests of On or Heliopolis had regarded the event as marking the beginning of the year. But now the new calendar-makers simply took it as a fixed event ; and they thought that by making the beginning of the season of *Shom* coincide with this rising of Sirius, which chanced also to coincide with the first increase of the Nile, they were providing themselves with a yearly check upon their calendar.

Soon, however, owing to the absence of a leap-year's day, the calendar began to fall back, and the rising of Sirius ceased to have any relationship to the first day of *Shom*. Moreover, the rising of Sirius is not a fixed event, but moves slowly forward by about eight days in a thousand years. The best the Egyptians could do, therefore, was each year to note very carefully the date in their calendar on which the rising of Sirius took place ; and in these records, of course, they also named the reigning king and the year of his reign.

Some of these records have been found ; and by a simple calculation the exact date B.C. can be ascertained, subject, however, to a possible error of fourteen hundred and sixty years, that is to say, an entire cycle of the Egyptian calendar around the annual seasons.

There are also several records of other astronomical or seasonal events which check any calculations made by means of the historical materials ; but still there is this possible error of a whole cycle. Of course, there is no possibility of such an error in the later periods of Egyptian history ; but previous to the Seventeenth Dynasty some think that there is room for speculation.

Between the Seventeenth Dynasty and the Twelfth

the royal lists give scores of names of kings about whom hardly anything is known. Most Egyptologists suppose that two or more lines of Pharaohs were then ruling at the same time in different parts of Egypt, and that the whole period was quite short, few of these monarchs having been able to retain their thrones for long in the unsettled conditions prevailing at the time ; but certain other Egyptologists think that the royal names in the lists represent one continuous sequence and that the period was therefore very long.

Now there are astronomical dates on record both in the Eighteenth Dynasty and in the Twelfth, and these latter scholars therefore place those in the Twelfth Dynasty a whole cycle of fourteen hundred and sixty years earlier than do the former.

Personally, in common with the great majority of Egyptologists, I accept the shorter dating, about which I do not feel that there can be much doubt ; and those who have read the first two volumes of my *History of the Pharaohs* will have found there a full discussion of the subject, and, I hope, a full justification for the dates I use in this present book. Actually, I think, it is possible to be very precise in all these dates right back to the dawn of Egyptian history, for there does not seem to be any real break in the chronology. From the Twelfth Dynasty back to the First all is plain sailing, for the Turin Papyrus gives us the total of the years of the duration of the Eleventh Dynasty, and also the total for the whole period from the First to the Eighth Dynasties ; and the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties were contemporaneous with the Eleventh, the latter ruling in the south while the two former ruled in the north.

This uninterrupted chronological sequence right back to the thirty-fifth century before Christ makes the story

of ancient Egypt of supreme importance, for nowhere else can we obtain so long and so continuous a view of a nation's life. Detailed Egyptian history begins at a date about as long before the foundation of Rome as the foundation of Rome is before the present day ; and the period covered in this present volume, from Menes, the first king of the First Dynasty, to Cleopatra, the last sovereign of the Thirty-third Dynasty, is nearly twice as long as the period from Cleopatra's day to our own.

In this tremendous parade of years we see no less than three hundred and fifty Pharaohs pass by, some of them mere shadows having little more than a name, but some of them very real personages, and almost all having recognized places in the long chronological line. In the following pages, of course, it will not be necessary to speak of every king ; but even with the omissions necessary in an outline of this kind, the impression left upon the mind of the reader will be that of an almost endless procession of royal figures marching through the ages.

A few words must be added in regard to Egyptian kingship and its peculiarities. As will be seen in the following pages Egypt was at first divided into a number of states, and after these were united every sovereign was crowned as ruler of each of them, and was given several names to correspond to his several capacities. From the Fifth Dynasty onwards the personal name he had received at birth was used in his capacity as ' Son of the Sun-god, Re ', his title as representative of the old sun-city, Heliopolis ; as King of Upper and Lower Egypt he was given a name at his coronation by which he was most frequently called, except in early times ; as representative of the old ' Hawk '-tribe, of which

we shall presently read, he had a third name, this being a most important one at first, but of less account in later days ; as ruler of the aboriginal tribes who worshipped the god Set he received yet another name ; and so forth.

In this book, however, it is only necessary to use two names for each king—his personal name and his name as King of Upper and Lower Egypt. These two names were always written with a sort of girdle drawn around them, now called a cartouche.

The title *Pharaoh* is the Bible's rendering of the Egyptian *peroe*, which means 'Great Estate' in the sense of 'Great Hereditary Proprietor', each Egyptian king being called the Pharaoh, just as each Emperor of Japan is called the Mikado. The word does not appear in the earliest inscriptions, but it is convenient nowadays to use it throughout Egyptian history.

Each Pharaoh celebrated the anniversary of his coronation as an annual festival, but he did not date the years of his reign from that day or from the day of his accession. Every year of the reign of every Pharaoh¹ was reckoned as beginning on the New Year's Day of the calendar, that is to say, the first day of the first month of the first season (*Akhe*) ; and the same year which was the last of any reign became the first year of the new reign, even though there were only a few days left of it, the second year of the new reign beginning, thus, on the first New Year's Day after the previous king's death.

Each Pharaoh celebrated his first *sed-hab*, or Jubilee, thirty years from the time when he had been proclaimed heir to the throne, or, in the event of his not having

¹ In my opinion there was no exception to this rule ; but most Egyptologists think that there were occasional exceptions.

been so proclaimed before his accession, then thirty years from his accession itself. When he reached the age of seventy it was customary for him to elevate the heir to the throne to the position of joint-Pharaoh with him.

The law of succession was matriarchal, that is to say, the heritage passed through the female line. A Pharaoh's eldest daughter was the legal heiress of the kingdom ; but each sovereign selected, when possible, a male heir—usually one of his sons, and in most cases this prince then married the heiress-princess so as to legalize through her his right to the throne. Thus the marriage of a brother to his sister was the most usual form of union in the royal family. The Pharaoh had as many wives as he wished, but there was only one, usually the heiress, who was his Great Queen.

CHAPTER TWO

The Dawn of Egyptian History

THE land of Egypt represents only the last six hundred miles of the territory through which the Nile flows down from Central Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt is, so to say, just the last lap of the Nile's four thousand miles' journey ; but the early Egyptians did not realize the fact, for the country beyond their southern frontier was at first wholly unknown to them, and was believed to be inhabited by ghosts and spirits, and whence came the great river was a mystery to them. It simply tumbled into their ken over the rocks of the First Cataract.

Almost the whole of North Africa behind the Mediterranean coast-line is a vast desert ; but the waters of the Nile are full of particles of fertile earth, and the river has not only found a way for itself through this desert down to the sea but has in flood-time lined its course with yearly deposits of rich soil, and has thus created a winding valley famous for its crops.

It is a narrow valley, the cultivable land being sometimes only a few yards wide on either side of the river, and sometimes broadening to a width of a few miles of flat fields stretching away to the barren ramparts of the hills which seem to hold back the desert to right and left.

About five hundred miles below the First Cataract

and a hundred miles from the coast the river divides, and in ancient times reached the sea in seven branches, thus creating a large triangle of flat lowlands based on a coast-line of about a hundred and fifty miles. This area was called by the Greeks the 'Delta', because of its similarity in shape to that Greek letter ; and the name is still used. It is also spoken of as Lower Egypt, while the long, thin valley between its apex and the First Cataract is called Upper Egypt, and the more rugged valley between the First and Second Cataract is now known as Lower Nubia, above which is the vast country once called Cush or Ethiopia and now known as the Sudan.

The ancient Egyptians called their country *Kemi*, 'the Black Land', owing to the dark colour of the soil ; but as early as the time of Homer it was known to the Greeks as *Aigypptos*, a name of doubtful origin. To the Hebrews it was known as *Misraim*.

The Delta or Lower Egypt is not a particularly interesting country to the eye : it is just a level plain of fields and trees extending as far as one can see, intersected by the branches of the Nile and by innumerable canals, and dotted all over with villages and occasional large towns. Down by the coast there are extensive marshes and lakes, and at the eastern and western limits of the great triangle the soil gradually becomes more sandy until the fields merge into the desert and the prevailing green passes into a boundless yellow.

In summer-time this whole area lies basking in the blazing sun, and though the air is cooled by the damp wind from the sea, the general temperature is considerably hotter than that of Southern Europe, while the desert on either side shimmers in the heat and displays

here and there a seeming expanse of blue water which is but a mirage.

In winter, however, the climate is ideal, in spite of occasional rain ; and usually the sky is intensely blue, with little white clouds scudding across it before a north-west wind. In the sun and out of the wind it is as warm as one could wish, but in the shade it is cool, and even cold.

In Upper Egypt, or at least in the southern part of Upper Egypt, the temperature in summer is extremely high ; but in winter-time though the days are piping hot the evenings are chilly and the nights cold. Here there is practically no rain, and the dazzling sun is rarely hidden by a cloud. Each morning the fiery orb comes up from behind the hills and cliffs of the eastern desert in a glory of gold ; each day it travels high overhead across the clear blue sky, flooding the luxuriant valley with its heat and its brilliance ; and each evening it goes down behind the western cliffs in a blaze of colour.

At night the stars are so brilliant, by reason of the clarity of the atmosphere, that they seem to be a suspended shower of glittering diamonds, while the Milky Way stretches in a great arc from horizon to horizon like a white rainbow ; and at full moon the light is so strong that one can read a book without lamp or candle.

Every year in June the Nile begins to rise owing to the rainfall in Central Africa, and by August it overflows its banks and pours out upon the fields, so that the whole valley of Upper Egypt is transformed into a lake amidst which the towns and villages rise like islands, connected one with another by embanked roads. After the middle of October the waters rapidly

subside, and in late November the sowing of the crops begins in the wet mud.

In the Delta, however, the inundation is only partial because the water is carried into the canals, and while Upper Egypt has two harvests, one in February and the second in the early summer, there is a third in Lower Egypt which is gathered while the upper country is under water. Thus Egypt is, and always was, a land of plenty, except in the rare event of a series of disappointing floods when some of the fields fail to receive a proper watering and the earth becomes parched.

All along the banks of the Nile and the canals, however, from time immemorial the Egyptian peasants have raised the water by one means and another on to their fields, passing it through narrow channels over the ground to irrigate the crops. The great river has thus ever been the very life of the country, and it has also always afforded an admirable means of transport ; for the north-west wind blows almost continuously, and the ships sail up-stream with ease and rapidity, while on the journey down-stream they float upon the strong current with sails furled.

The geographical situation of the country was very favourable to the development of national life, for it was shut in between the eastern and western deserts ; its northern boundary was the sea ; and its southern frontier was fairly well protected by the desert again, and by the rocky cataracts of the Nile. Until the Fifteenth Dynasty it was never invaded in force by a foreign enemy ; and thus it was able to build up and maintain its civilization under conditions more peaceful and undisturbed than any known in other lands.

At the dawn of history Egypt seems to have been

divided into three, and, later, four kingdoms. In Lower Egypt, or the Delta, some sixty kings appear to have reigned before the establishment of Manetho's First Dynasty, and tradition stated that the duration of this line covered rather more than two thousand years—which would carry us back to about 5500 B.C. as the date of the establishment of this Lower Egyptian monarchy.

The names of only seven of these kings are known, and there are no traces of their civilization left to us. Their first capital appears to have been the city of Buto, situated near the marshes behind the sea-coast ; and it was the early royal house established in this city which first used the cobra as its royal symbol—the famous symbol afterwards used by all the Pharaohs. But another city, Sais, on the western side of the Delta and farther back from the sea, superseded Buto as the capital ; and it is here that the Lower Egyptian kings were reigning in the period immediately prior to the First Dynasty.

The title of these monarchs was *Bya*, meaning ' Bee ' or ' Hornet ' ; and their crown was a sort of high cap with a long peak rising at the back, and a curved projection like a piece of wire standing out from the front. It was coloured red, and the royal treasury was known as the ' Red House '. A tuft of the papyrus-plant, which grew in profusion in the marshes, was the badge of the country ; and the kingdom was generally spoken of as the ' North-Land ' or ' Papyrus-Land '.

Tradition said that some three centuries after this Delta kingdom had been established, another royal realm came into being at the city of Eheninsi, later known as Heracleopolis, in Upper Egypt, some seventy miles south of the apex of the Delta. Here the title of



SCENE FROM QUEEN HETSHIEPSUT'S TEMPLE AT DÊR EL-BAHRI
SHOWING THE SOLDIERS OF HER FAMOUS EXPEDITION TO POUNT



LION PLACED IN THE TEMPLE OF NAPATA BY AMENOPHIS III.
NOW IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE INSCRIPTION ON THE PEDESTAL GIVES THE CARTOUCHES OF TUTENKHAMEN AND SAYS
THAT HE RESTORED THE MONUMENTS OF AMENOPHIS III. PRESUMABLY, THEREFORE, THE
LION BELONGS TO THE REIGN OF AMENOPHIS III

[To face p. 140

the king was *Insi*, which means 'Reed'; and the crown was a tall white cap, while the royal treasury was called the 'White House'. The northern frontier fortress which protected this kingdom from invasion by its neighbours of Lower Egypt, and which was situated where afterwards stood the city of Memphis, not far from the modern Cairo, was called 'The White Rampart'; and this place seems ultimately to have become the capital of the kingdom.

Only the fragments of the names of nine or ten of these predynastic Reed-kings are known, but there is reason to suppose that some fifty monarchs had reigned over this kingdom before Manetho's First Dynasty was established. Their realms extended southwards for perhaps two hundred and fifty miles or so, and their southern frontier separated them from the territory of the people known as the 'Hawks'.

The Hawk-capital was the city of Nekhen, afterwards called Hieraconpolis, south of Luxor and over four hundred miles from the sea; and the original Hawk-kingdom was probably confined to the stretch of the Nile valley between Luxor and Edfu. Each king was known as the *Hur* or 'Hawk', and tradition said that the monarchy lasted some twelve hundred and fifty years; but neither the number of kings nor their names have been preserved. Finally, three hundred and fifty years before the foundation of the First Dynasty, a line of kings arose in the city of Theni (Thinis), near Abydos, north of Luxor; and as it would seem that this line conquered and superseded the dynasty of the Hawks, from which it was probably an offshoot, the date of the establishment of the original Hawk-monarchy at Nekhen may be placed, if tradition is to be believed, sixteen hundred years

before the establishment of the First Dynasty, that is to say about 5000 B.C.

These kings of Theni took over the title of ' Hawk ', and we are told that ten of them reigned in this period of three hundred and fifty years ; but the names of only the last four have been preserved. The earliest of these, who was the seventh of his line, and who was called Ro, is the first Egyptian king whose name appears upon contemporary objects, it being inscribed upon vases found in his tomb at Theni ; and as there is reason to suppose that he successfully invaded the country of his northern neighbours, it may be that he and his people acquired from them the art of writing which had perhaps been introduced at a somewhat earlier date in the north.

This monarch was succeeded by another Hawk-king named Ket, whose name appears upon objects found in his tomb at Theni, and also in a primitive inscription discovered not far from Eheninsi, the capital of the Reed-kings ; and thus it may be that he had been acknowledged as paramount king as far north as the apex of the Delta. At any rate his successor, whose name seems to have been Selk, ' Scorpion ', is not only called Hawk-king in contemporary inscriptions but is represented wearing the white crown of the Reed-kings.

The next monarch was named Narmer ; and the fact that a primitive inscription makes reference to his conquests in which he took a hundred and twenty thousand prisoners, while he is represented wearing the red crown of the Hornet-kings, is a clear indication that he overcame the people of the Delta and established himself as sovereign ruler of all Egypt. Thus, his son who was named Meni—or Menes, as Manetho

called him—was the first sovereign to inherit the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt, and with him Manetho begins his First Dynasty.

Such, in brief, is the story of primitive Egypt before the days of its union into one monarchy ; but whence came the people of these different kingdoms it is hard to say. Throughout Upper Egypt large numbers of pottery vases and other objects have been found which are usually called 'prehistoric' or 'predynastic' ; and these, which all belong to this period when Egypt was still divided into separate kingdoms, show that the crafts were well developed and that the standard was of about the same level right along the Nile valley. These objects have mostly been recovered from the cemeteries at the edge of the desert, and have been preserved by the dry sand ; but in the Delta the graves were dug in the damp earth and nothing now remains to tell us what sort of things the Lower Egyptians were making during this same period.

The fact, however, that the first traces of writing and of sculpture appear in Upper Egypt just at the time when the Hawk-kings of the south were mastering the Hornet-kings of the north, suggests that these arts had developed in the Delta at an earlier age than in Upper Egypt, and that the southerners had acquired them from the northerners. But there is no way of knowing whether this implies that the ruling classes amongst the Lower Egyptians had in part come from Asia, where somewhat similar arts were developing in Mesopotamia and elsewhere, or whether a mere exchange of ideas between the Mesopotamians and the Delta people, fostered by commerce, is sufficient to account for certain marked resemblances between the two primitive civilizations.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Again, it is not known whether the peoples of Upper Egypt had in the main moved up-stream from the Delta, as is rather implied by the frequent representations of many-oared river-boats in the paintings upon the earliest pottery, and by the fact that the primitive shrine of every god was a boat or 'ark'. Certainly it seems improbable that this early Nile-traffic originally moved from south to north, for the Nile was not navigable beyond Egypt's southern frontier, owing to the cataracts, whereas from the sea to the First Cataract there was an uninterrupted river-highway.

Yet the tradition is strong that the Egyptian nobility came from the land of Pount, the territory on the East African coast opposite the southern end of Arabia ; and it may be that the ruling race of the Hawks did enter the Nile valley from the south-east.

There are many early references, also, to an aboriginal race scattered about the country, who were worshippers of the god Set ; and it is clear that these people were not absorbed into the dominant nation until historic times. According to Egyptian tradition a part of Egypt had been ruled, prior to the First Dynasty, by seven queens ; and it seems likely that these queens were the rulers of this aboriginal people, and that the famous vulture-headdress worn by all later Egyptian queens was a relic of the royal insignia of these matriarchal sovereign-ladies. But where these aborigines themselves came from is unknown ; and, as I have said, the question whether the dominant nation which swallowed them was mainly southern or northern in origin cannot be answered either, because the cultivated soil of the Delta has preserved no remains of this early period.

With the last four Hawk-kings prior to the union of

Upper and Lower Egypt we find ourselves confronted with a civilization in being, and we do not really know whence it came. Writing had begun ; the arts were already highly developed ; great armies were in commission ; cities had grown up ; and the king was surrounded by his ministers and his nobles. Tradition is probably not far wrong in stating that there had been a period of some two thousand years of monarchy in Lower Egypt and a period nearly as long in Upper Egypt before the union of the whole land ; but actual civilization had not then existed in Upper Egypt for more than a few generations, though how long it had existed in Lower Egypt is, as has been said, unable to be determined.

At any rate, when Meni came to the throne of the united kingdoms, he must have regarded himself as being the latest product of centuries of gradually increasing refinement, and he could look back upon an immense series of ancestors whose names had been handed down orally and were only now being recorded in writing. He must have felt himself to be standing at the very summit of the long upward path from the obscurity of the far-off days to the heights of civilized life ; and his indignation would have been great if he could have heard himself spoken of by modern scholars as a primitive monarch of the archaic period of Egyptian history.

CHAPTER THREE

The First Three Dynasties

THE great Meni, the first King of the First Dynasty, probably came to the throne as a young man in 3407 B.C. His name as Hawk-king was Ohe, 'the Fighter', and the name Meni appears to have been assumed at his coronation. He married a lady named Neithotpe who may have been heiress of the queens of the aboriginal Set-worshippers, for she was ultimately buried in the city of Nubi (Ombos) which was one of the main capitals of this scattered race ; and if this be so it will explain why Meni assumed the title 'Lord of the Vulture and the Cobra', which was afterwards used by all the Pharaohs, and which seems to have implied that he was lord of the throne of the aboriginal queens whose symbol was the vulture and lord also of the throne of the earliest kings of Buto whose symbol was the cobra.

As sovereign of all Egypt he was also Reed-king and Hornet-king, and wore the white and the red crowns of those two monarchies ; and though he was buried in his native city of Theni, he resided chiefly at the new city of Mennofre or Memphis which he founded close to the old Reed-kings' fortress of the White Rampart at the apex of the Delta.

Memphis was pleasantly situated on the west side of the Nile, a short distance back from the river, amidst

rich fields and shady palm-groves ; and behind it were the slopes of rock and sand which led up into the desert. The houses of the city were made of sun-dried bricks and were whitewashed on the outside ; while the roofing beams were supported upon delicate wooden columns, painted in bright colours. The rooms were furnished with reed mats ; carved wooden chairs, softly cushioned ; painted wooden chests ; inlaid tables ; and couches with carved legs and mattresses of string stretched criss-cross over the framework. Upon the tables were beautiful crystal, alabaster or blue-glazed pottery cups, and dishes made of alabaster, diorite, breccia, and other ornamental stone, ground to an almost shell-like thinness, and sometimes rimmed with gold ; and the toilet-chests of ebony and ivory had their charming little alabaster perfume-pots, rouge-pots, palettes for preparing green paint for the eyelids, ivory boxes and trays, pins for the hair, and so forth.

This district had long been famous for the skill of its potters and vase-makers, and in the new city Meni erected a great temple to the god Ptah who was the divine Craftsman of the gods, and whose High Priest always had the title of Great Master Vase-Maker. Stone was not yet used in building, and the temple, like the houses, was probably made of whitewashed brick, the roof being supported by decorated wooden columns ; but already sculptors in stone were turning out excellent statues, and no doubt there was a figure of the god in his holy-of-holies.

The people to be seen in the streets of the city were clothed in fine linen, the men wearing a short skirt or kilt and sometimes a cloak, and the women a long, tight-fitting dress, with a coloured bodice which was little more than a *brassière*. Collars of brightly coloured

beads were worn by men and women, and the jewellery was already magnificent, semi-precious stones such as amethyst, turquoise and carnelian being used with glaze and gold.

The cart-wheel had not yet been invented, and neither horse nor camel was known; and all that could not be carried by man or donkey was transported upon sledges which slipped easily enough over the roads, especially when preceded by a man sprinkling water. The rich were often conveyed about in carrying-chairs, the poles resting upon the shoulders of four or more men; and, when walking, they carried a long staff which they handled with great dignity. The women were never veiled, but went freely about their business, their status being high, and, indeed, in legal matters, higher than that of the men.

Meni reigned for sixty-two years, and in the end was killed by a hippopotamus which he was hunting. He was succeeded by Athuthi, the young son of one of his lesser wives, who is said to have been a skilled physician. It is interesting to notice that the prescription of a hair-restorer invented by his queen has been preserved—though its efficacy may be doubted, for her false fringe was found in her tomb.

Tradition states that he was ultimately assassinated by conspirators belonging to the aboriginal Set-worshippers, and it seems that his son had a struggle to gain the crown for himself. Ultimately the throne passed to a queen named Henneit, who was followed by four kings, the dynasty coming to a close in 3144 B.C. The sixth king of the line, who was named Merbi, was the first to be accepted as legitimate by the people of the north; for it would seem that his mother was a princess of the old royal house of the Hornets,



RED POTTERY LION. FIRST OR SECOND DYNASTY



PLAIT OF HAIR AND FALSE FRINGE FOUND IN THE TOMB OF A QUEEN
OF THE FIRST DYNASTY

[To face p. 22

whereas his predecessors had been but conquering Hawks from the south.

The two and a half centuries during which this First Dynasty held the throne have left very little material for the historian to use, but the archæological evidence is surprisingly plentiful considering the remoteness of the period. This is mainly due to the fact that the tombs of all these sovereigns, which were situated in the desert behind the ancestral city of Theni, have been excavated in modern times and have yielded a wonderful collection of small objects, perhaps the most striking of which is a set of four jewelled bracelets found on the arm of Athuthi's queen.

These bracelets reveal a mastery of the jeweller's art which could only have been attained by many centuries of civilized and cultured life. There are also some small statuettes and figures in ivory which would be a credit to any age ; while there is sculptured-work in hard stone which shows a high standard of skill and artistic feeling.

The Second Dynasty, like the First, has left to the present day a great number of objects which reveal the continued development of the arts ; but the historical material, though fuller, is again scanty. Yet there is enough to show that the period was marked by bitter factional warfare. The dynasty, which consisted of nine kings, held the throne from 3144 to 2888 B.C.—rather over two and a half centuries ; and each monarch continued to call himself Hawk-king, Reed-king, Hornet-king, and Lord of the Vulture and the Cobra, while some of them also used the title Set-king, that is to say, king of the aboriginal tribes who worshipped that god. Their chief capital was Memphis, and two or three of them appear to have been

buried in the desert behind that city, while others were interred, like their predecessors, in the cemetery near Theni.

The factional warfare to which reference has just been made is very complicated, and there is too little material available to make a consecutive story. The second king of the dynasty assumed the name Neb-re, which means 'Re is Lord'; and as this is the first time in Egyptian history that the name of the sun-god Re appears, his reign seems to mark the rise of the worship of this god to that position of dominance in Egyptian affairs which it afterwards retained for more than three thousand years.

Re (or Ra) was the great solar deity worshipped at the ancient city of On or Heliopolis, the 'City of the Sun', on the east bank of the Nile a few miles to the north of Memphis, which was on the west bank; and already for generations the priests of On had made sacrifice to the sun before the sacred *benben*-stone, a pyramidion or small pyramid which stood in the inner court of the temple. These priests were famous for their wisdom, particularly in astronomy, and the High Priest of Re at On was known as 'The Great-one of Observations', that is to say, the 'Chief Astronomer'; but it was only now, in this Second Dynasty, that this solar priesthood began to control the destinies of Egypt.

The third king of the dynasty, whose name seems to have been Bineter, however, came to blows with these Re-worshippers, who allied themselves with the aboriginal Set-worshippers in a great rebellion against his authority; but in the thirteenth year of his reign, 3045 B.C., which, so the old records state, was the three-hundred-and-sixty-third year since the accession of

Meni, Bineter utterly defeated these allies. At the close of this war the king took the title of 'Heir of Ombos', the chief capital of the Set-people; and his two successors definitely called themselves Set-kings, as well as Hawk-kings and so forth, as though to pacify these defeated rebels. According to Manetho it was this Bineter who instituted the matriarchal system in the Egyptian royal house, and legalized female succession; and it seems likely that in this he was adopting the old custom of these Set-people.

The sixth king of the line, apparently a usurper, was called Neferkere, a name which once more incorporates that of the sun-god, and thus hints at a return of the priests of On to power; and since neither he nor his two successors were recognized as legitimate in the old Hawk-realms in the south, it looks as though the quarrels had been revived, and that these three monarchs were maintained upon the throne by the sun-worshippers, and received only the enforced allegiance of the southerners.

Then came a great conqueror from the south, whose name, Kheneri, is often misread Khesekhem or Khesekhemui, *neri* and *sekhem* being two words of similar meaning written with the same sign, but *neri* being evidently the correct reading since Manetho renders the name as Chenneres. This great conqueror was a legitimate Hawk-king, and probably a descendant of the Pharaoh whose throne had been usurped by the above-mentioned Neferkere, the candidate supported by On; and upon his statues found at the old Hawk-capital, Nekhen, there is a record stating that he killed over forty thousand of his enemies in the north, while another inscription tells of his overthrow of 'the accursed one', a term usually applied to a fallen

usurper or rebel whose name has been effaced from the records.

In the end Kheneri appears to have married a princess of the defeated line and to have pacified the whole country, re-establishing the union. In honour of his victory he erected a temple in his ancestral city of Nekhen, the gateway of which was made of the beautiful pink granite quarried at the First Cataract ; for the Egyptians had now learnt to build in stone, and were already becoming proficient in that art of handling large masonry blocks which they were soon to bring to such perfection. He also caused a tomb for himself to be constructed in the ancient burial-ground of the early kings at Theni, and the feature of this building was a central chamber likewise made of stone—the first of its kind.

The excavation of this tomb has brought to light the fragments of the regalia, including the royal sceptre of gold, sard and copper ; gold bracelets and other jewellery ; superb stone vases and ewers ; chests, baskets, pots and pans ; implements of copper ; and, curiously enough, large numbers of copper pins and needles. These different objects and his statues from Nekhen display the wonderful skill of the artists and craftsmen of his time ; and it is clear that the great age of Egyptian art had already begun.

With his successor Nebkere-Beby, who came to the throne in 2887 B.C., Manetho begins a new dynasty, the Third ; and, indeed, with him a new chapter of Egyptian history certainly opened, for we hear no more of these factional wars, and in the centuries to come the country developed its astonishing civilization in profound internal peace. Henceforth, however, the priests of On were ever behind the throne, and the

sun-god, Re, was the patron of the royal line, in which fact we see that the union effected with such bloodshed by Kheneri really left the power of his former enemies unshaken. In future, though the Pharaoh was Hawk-king, Set-king, Reed-king, Hornet-king, and Lord of the Vulture and the Cobra, he was the chosen of Re, and On was the most sacred shrine in all the land.

Little is known of Nebkere-Beby, although he seems to have left a vivid memory behind him, for he figures in a later folk-tale as a man of stern morals who ordered the faithless wife of his Chief Magician to be burnt at the stake. But his brother and successor, Thoser (or Zoser), was one of the most famous of the early Pharaohs, his name being revered and his spirit worshipped throughout Egyptian history. His great reputation for learning was perhaps due to the fact that his prime minister was the famous Iemhotpe (or Imhotep), the philosopher, physician, architect, and statesman, who was afterwards regarded as divine, and was ultimately identified with the Greek god of medicine, Asklepios. The king and his prime minister evidently worked together ; and the greatest of their achievements was the building of the Pharaoh's mighty tomb and mortuary temple in the desert behind Memphis.

The tomb was constructed in the following manner. Upon the desert plateau the sand was cleared away and the flat surface of the underlying limestone was exposed over a wide area ; and a large pit was then quarried in the rock, twenty-four feet square and nearly eighty feet deep, with a rock-hewn stairway leading down into it. The bottom of the pit was lined with granite quarried at the First Cataract, five

hundred miles away, the blocks being floated down the river and then dragged up to the desert on sledges ; and upon this granite pavement two stone chambers were erected, the walls being lined with green-glazed tiles, rather like a modern bathroom.

These chambers and the stairway and passage leading to them were then embedded in masonry up to the surface, and above them a great square of masonry was built, some forty feet high and nearly four hundred feet broad and long, the blocks being of limestone quarried out of the cliffs on the opposite side of the Nile. Upon this huge square structure a second and rather smaller square was then built, and on this a third, fourth, fifth, and sixth square was constructed, each somewhat smaller than the one below, so that in the end the building assumed the appearance of a sort of blunt-topped pyramid in six enormous steps, the total height being nearly two hundred feet.

This mountain of stone, gleaming white against the sky, was surrounded by a paved courtyard to which a magnificent approach was made, leading up from the fields behind the city ; and upon the paved area a wonderful temple was erected with great colonnades of delicately-fluted white limestone pillars. The ruins of the temple have only recently been excavated out of the sand ; but the tomb, known as the Step-Pyramid, has dominated the landscape throughout the four thousand eight hundred years since it was built, and though the burial chambers have long since been robbed, the whole structure has suffered little more damage than that caused by the natural weathering of the surface. From the temple some splendid portrait-statues of this Pharaoh have been recovered.

Another great tomb, in the form of a huge, low

rectangle of sun-dried brick over a series of subterranean chambers, was built far up in the south, not far from Theni ; but since the names of both the king and his mother have been found therein, it is not possible to say whether this was the burial-place of the queen, or whether it was a secondary tomb for Thoser himself, the construction of two tombs, one for the body and the other a sort of cenotaph for the spirit, being not unusual in early times.

Traces of the king's other activities still remain, amongst which may be mentioned the building of a temple at On, and the working of the copper-mines in Sinai ; and we read of a great famine which took place in his time owing to a series of bad Niles. In this regard he is said to have written to the governor of the upper country, saying : " This is to inform you of the sorrow which has afflicted me upon my great throne, and how my heart aches because of the great calamity which has occurred," and asking if there was anything that he could do.

Not much is known of the next two kings, but the fifth monarch of the dynasty, Neferkere or Keneferre, 2837 B.C., is important as the Pharaoh in whose reign lived the great philosopher Kegemni who wrote for his children a book of maxims which became one of the Egyptian classics. The preface to this book tells us that Kegemni " having become thoroughly acquainted with men's characters, sent for his children to come to him, and they came, full of wonder (as to why he had summoned them). Then he said to them : ' Pay attention to everything that is written in this book, just as though I myself were telling it to you ' ; and his children thereupon laid themselves down around him, and recited these maxims as they were written,

and in their opinion these maxims were more beautiful than anything else in the whole land."

Very few of the maxims have survived, but two of them may be quoted: "Do not brag about your strength, because nobody knows what may happen or what God will do when *He* strikes"; and "Every house is open to the unpretentious man, and there is always plenty of room for him who has a modest tongue; but a sharp sword is against him who would push his way in." There are also some remarks about eating nicely, and not being either greedy at a party or critical of the food.

The next, and last, king of the dynasty was the great Snofru, whom later generations revered as one of the outstanding monarchs of early times. There are many records of his activities, which included a punitive campaign against the negroes living above the First Cataract—an expedition which must have greatly extended Egyptian knowledge of the Nile, proving as it did that the river did not rise anywhere near Egypt's southern frontier but came rushing over the Second Cataract, a hundred and fifty miles farther south, and still showed no sign of its source. Perhaps in connection with this campaign, Snofru built a large number of river-ships, some of them a hundred and seventy feet long—a very respectable size.

We also read of a peaceful expedition by sea to the Syrian coast to obtain wood from the cedar-forests of the Lebanon. Forty shiploads of cedar-logs were brought back, and these were used for further ship-building and also for making the gates of the royal palace. The copper-mines in the desert of Sinai were so vigorously worked during this reign that Snofru became in after years a sort of guardian spirit of that

region ; and it is evident that the gold-mines in the eastern desert between the Nile and the Red Sea were made to yield their wealth for the glory of the Pharaoh.

The favourite royal residence was somewhere near the modern Wasta, thirty miles south of Memphis, and in the neighbouring desert, at a place now known as Meidûm, the king's tomb was erected. Its shape was quite different from that of the Step-Pyramid of Thoser. First of all, a huge flat-topped rectangle of limestone masonry was built, with sides slanting at a steep angle. A passage passed into this structure, sloping downwards and then rising perpendicularly upwards into the burial chamber through an aperture in the floor ; for the kings already realized that in the years to come their tombs were likely to be robbed, and the entrance-passages were therefore made with cunning, and the mouth concealed by masonry after the burial.

On top of this mass of stone blocks a smaller but higher square was built ; but all this lower part of the huge tomb is concealed to-day under mounds of debris. Above it was a great, squat tower, seventy feet high, made of solid masonry ; and on top of this another and smaller square structure was built, twenty feet high. Above this again a final storey was erected, the whole tomb being over two hundred feet high. The original summit is now destroyed, but it may have been shaped like a pyramid. The outer walls throughout were faced with perfectly joined blocks of polished limestone, and the whole surface was so smooth that the upper part was, and still is, inaccessible to all but the birds.

On the east side a beautiful little temple was built, and the whole vast structure, which took eighteen

years to build, was approached by a magnificent causeway leading up from the fields.

Another tomb or cenotaph was erected for this Pharaoh in the desert to the south-west of Memphis : it is a limestone structure in the form of a pyramid, over seven hundred feet in length at the base on each side, and more than three hundred feet high. This is the earliest true pyramid ever erected by an Egyptian king, and a few words of explanation as to the significance of this shape are necessary.

The ancient *Benben*, or sacred stone, in the temple of the sun at On, as has already been said, had the form of a pyramidion or small pyramid ; and thus it seems that Snofru built his tomb in this shape because he desired that his body should be embedded for ever in a huge *benben*, that is to say, in the heart of the symbol of the sun-god Re—just as many a Christian monarch has wished that his mausoleum should be planned in the form of the cross. It is possible that there was a *benben* at the summit of Snofru's tomb at Meidûm, and perhaps Thoser's Step-Pyramid was similarly crowned ; but this pyramid near Memphis provides the first instance of the entire tomb-structure being built in *benben*-form.

By the end of this dynasty, which Manetho arbitrarily closes with the death of Snofru in 2789 B.C., the arts, especially of sculpture, had attained a standard which was never surpassed. The painted statue of Nofret, one of the ladies of the court, is the most astonishingly lifelike piece of portraiture left to us by any period of Egyptian history ; and though no more than six centuries had elapsed since the union of Upper and Lower Egypt in the time of Meni, the very summit of artistic achievement had already been reached.

At this time Egypt was probably the most cultured and the most enlightened country in the world, and its people the best organized and governed. We often hear to-day of the supposed cruelty of the Pharaohs, of slaves building the pyramids under the merciless lash of the overseers, of victims thrown to the crocodiles, and so forth ; but anybody who has studied this ancient people will have soon realized that they must have been far more humane and must have had far greater respect for human life than any of the neighbouring nations.

Where cruelty exists cruel acts are recorded in contemporary painting or sculpture ; but in early Egypt no savagery is anywhere represented—except in certain scenes of warfare. All is decorous, decent and kindly ; and it is early in the history of the nation that we begin to read those protestations of morality, kindness, and high ideals which every Egyptian always liked to make, in the hope that his memory would be revered.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Fourth and Fifth Dynasties

THERE does not seem to have been any real break between the Third Dynasty and the Fourth ; but as Manetho begins a new line with the successor of Snofru, probably so as to keep in one group the Pharaohs who built the three famous pyramids of Gizeh, it is convenient to follow his arrangement.

The new monarch, who is thus considered the first king of the Fourth Dynasty, and who ascended the throne in 2789 B.C., was called Kheuf (or Kheufu), a name which the Greeks rendered as Cheops ; and he appears to have been the son of Snofru, though probably by a secondary wife. One gathers that he was bigoted in religious matters, and perhaps favoured the worship of the sun-god Re to the detriment of the rest of the pantheon, for Manetho says of him that "he was overbearing about the gods, yet wrote a sacred book which is regarded by the Egyptians as a work of great importance". Herodotus makes some reference to his having closed certain temples and forbidden the sacrifices ; but since his memory was revered for generations and the worship of his spirit was revived two thousand years later, it would seem that his religious intolerance was inspired by sectarianism, not by impiety.

His most famous achievement was the building of

the Great Pyramid, which must have been begun early in the reign, for throughout Egyptian history a Pharaoh's first concern upon ascending the throne was the preparation of his last resting-place and its mortuary equipment. On the desert plateau behind the city of Memphis there stood already Thoser's Step-Pyramid, and a few miles to the south was Snofru's Pyramid ; but the new king decided upon a site a few miles to the north, partly, perhaps, for the sake of giving his tomb a distinctive and individual position, partly so as to be nearer to the geographical division between Upper and Lower Egypt, and partly so as to be within view of the temple of the sun at On, across the river.

There was a high plateau of white limestone at the point chosen, from which an extensive view of the country around was to be obtained. Away to the north the valley opened into the green plains of the Delta ; and to the south the winding course of the Nile could be seen flanked by vivid fields and luxuriant palm groves as it came gliding down from the upper country between the high ground of the eastern and western deserts. Some miles away to the south-east stood the white houses and temples of Memphis, set amidst the green fields ; and at about an equal distance to the north-east, across the river, was sacred On, backed by the desert cliffs.

Upon this plateau a square area was marked out, each of its sides being over seven hundred and fifty feet in length, and the whole measuring nearly six hundred thousand square feet. Upon this base the pyramid was built, the height being four hundred and eighty feet, and the two million blocks of limestone used in its construction having a solid content

of about eighty-five million cubic feet. Most of the blocks in the lower courses weighed two tons or more, and each block had to be floated across from the quarries on the far side of the river to the foot of the plateau during the inundation when the whole valley was like a lake, and then had to be dragged up on to the plateau and stacked ready for use.

The three months of the annual inundation was a period in which no work could be done by the peasants upon the fields ; and thus an army of men could be employed upon the building during that time each year, without any detriment to the country's prosperity. Actually, common report in later times said that by the employment of a hundred thousand men for these three months in each year the whole pyramid was completed in twenty years ; and, if this be the case, an average of about twelve hundred blocks must have been laid every working day.

The blocks were dragged on sledges up sloping, zigzag ramps of sun-dried bricks temporarily built against the outside of the pyramid, probably some thirty men being assigned to each block ; and if each gang took an average of two days to pull one block into position, the daily twelve hundred blocks could have been laid by the labours of seventy thousand men, seventeen or eighteen thousand working on each of the four sides of the pyramid.

There were probably some eighteen or twenty zigzag ramps to each side, and at the height of any working day there may have been some thirty gangs moving slowly up the sloping path one behind the other, every gang dragging one block upon its sledge, the runners of which slid easily on a surface made slippery with sprinkled water.

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH DYNASTIES

Egyptian labourers always sang in chorus during their work ; and the rhythm of the song, which was beaten out when possible by stamping and clapping, not only lessened the toil by giving unity of action, but also created a spirit of excitement in the men which was very close to actual fun. Anybody who has seen modern Egyptian labourers at work, has heard their songs and laughter, and has seen the overseers swinging their whips about in entirely harmless and good-natured show, will realize that the building of a pyramid inflicted very little hardship upon the men whose services were thus commandeered for three months in each year.

Quarrying probably proceeded more or less all the year round, and as about a hundred thousand blocks were required each season, some two thousand had to be turned out every week, or about three hundred every day—a task which could have been easily accomplished by a few thousand quarrymen.

The creation of this mountain of stone was a miracle of organization ; and the final facing of the sides of the pyramid with smooth and perfectly joined blocks was a feat of the finest craftsmanship. The internal passages and burial chamber were built with unmatched skill, the joints between the huge blocks being almost invisible. The entrance was placed high up in the northern side ; and after the burial it was closed with masonry similar to that of the whole casing of the surface, so that there was no indication of its position in the glass-smooth and inaccessible face of the pyramid.

As a matter of fact the tomb was ultimately robbed in the days when the Pharaohs were no more ; but it was only when the casing-stones had been quarried away, partly for building purposes and partly in actual

searches for buried treasure, that the entrance was discovered. Throughout ancient times, however, the Pharaoh lay secure in the heart of this vast *benben* of the sun, and his spirit seemed to preside for ever over the destinies of his people. Old Sir Thomas Browne, of *Religio Medici* fame, says that “to be but pyramidally extant is a fallacy in duration”; yet to the Egyptians no such fallacy was apparent: the spirit of the Pharaoh was eternally alive within his white and shining mountain of stone, and his name endured from age to age, revered and unforgotten.

Around the pyramid a whole city of the dead arose, there being smaller pyramids for members of the royal family, and street after street of tombs of the nobles. Each tomb had its mortuary chapel or shrine, where offerings were made to the spirit of the departed; and on certain days the surviving relatives came to pay their respects, particularly upon the annual feast in honour of the dead held on the eighteenth day of the first month of the year—a date which in the original Egyptian calendar fell at the beginning of November, just as does its modern descendant, the feast of All Souls.

King Kheuf reigned twenty-three years, and thus saw the completion of his tomb. He was succeeded by a monarch named Redadef,¹ who built a much smaller pyramid for himself some miles to the north; but he only reigned eight years, and was followed by his uncle, Khefre (the Chephren of the Greeks), brother of Kheuf, who, although probably more than fifty years of age, decided to build himself a pyramid as large as that of Kheuf.

¹ The order of these kings of the Fourth Dynasty and the lengths of their reigns are sometimes disputed by Egyptologists; but there is little doubt that the arrangement here given is correct.

He selected a site close to the Great Pyramid, where the plateau was slightly higher ; and thus though the ultimate height of the structure was actually some nine or ten feet less than that of Kheuf's pyramid, it appears to be greater. The intention was to encase the whole pyramid in granite quarried at the First Cataract, but before this work could be completed the king died, after a reign of eighteen years.

It is generally thought that the famous Sphinx dates from this reign, but, though probable, this is not absolutely certain. The Sphinx is a huge lion, an animal typifying royalty, having a human head and wearing the headdress of a Pharaoh. It was sculptured out of a natural bluff of rock, and appears to have represented the sun-god Re in his aspect as ' Hawk of the sunrise ', patron of the royal line of the Hawkings. The whole figure is a hundred and fifty feet long, and the top of the head is seventy feet above the level of the pavement. Originally the face was painted red and the headdress white ; and the black eyes with their white eye-balls seemed to be staring towards the hills where the sun rose.

The Egyptians generally spoke of it as *Hu*, ' the hewn figure ', but the Greeks saw in it a resemblance to the mythical ' Sphinx ', the lioness with a woman's head who in the legend once terrified the Boeotian city of Thebes, and they therefore mistakenly gave it that name, which has stuck to it ever since—in spite of the fact that it is male and not female.

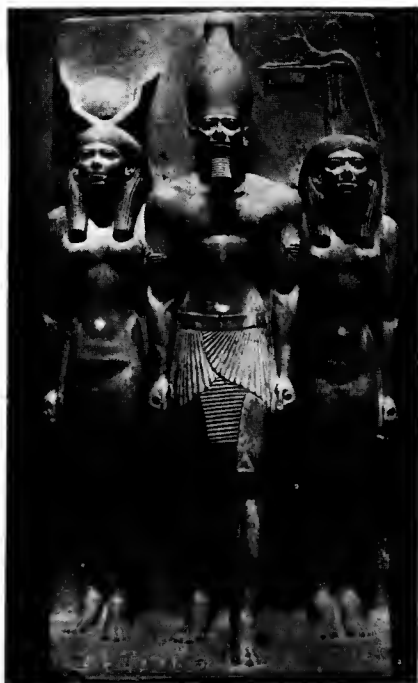
Khefre, who has left some wonderful portrait-statues of himself, was succeeded by the short-lived Sheru, probably his son, who in a year gave place to Menkeure (the Mykerinos of the Greeks), brother of Redadef and son of Kheuf. Menkeure was remem-

bered in Egyptian tradition as a good-hearted, extravagant man, who devoted vast sums to religion and charity ; and he certainly deserves respect for having had the courage and sense to place his pyramid close beside those two mountainous pyramids of Kheuf and Khefre without making any attempt to rival them in size. The Third Pyramid, as it is called, is less than half the size of the others ; and yet this Pharaoh reigned, like Khefre, for eighteen years.

When this pyramid was entered about a hundred years ago, fragments of the king's body and coffin were found ; and on the latter was the inscription : “. . . The Reed-king and Hornet-king Menkeure, living for ever, born of Heaven, conceived by the sky-goddess Nuth, heir of the earth-god Geb, his beloved. Thy mother Nuth spreadeth herself over thee in her name ‘Mystery of Heaven’, and granteth to thee that thou shalt exist as a god without enemies.”

A beautiful sarcophagus was also found, and was shipped to England ; but the vessel was lost with all hands in the Mediterranean, and the sarcophagus now reposes at the bottom of the sea. Excavations in the temple attached to the pyramid have brought to light some splendid statues of the king and of the gods ; but the building was not finished when he died, and his son and successor, Shepseskaf, hastily completed it in the cheapest possible manner.

Menkeure is said to have emptied his treasury “by feasting and enjoying himself unceasingly day and night” during the last years of his reign ; and his son was hard put to it for money. He reigned only four years, however, and with the brief reign of the next king, Iemhotpe, the dynasty came to an end in 2715 B.C.



KING MENKEURE OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY
BETWEEN TWO GODDESSES



THE PYRAMIDS OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY KINGS

[To face p. 40

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH DYNASTIES

The succeeding dynasty, the Fifth, seems to have risen in the following manner. In or before the reign of Kheuf, a certain nobleman of Elephantine, near the First Cataract, whose name was Userre, migrated to On, where he attained great importance in the priesthood of the sun, and married a princess of royal blood. They had three sons, the eldest of whom, Userkef by name, was born in Kheuf's time, and, probably during the reign of Menkeure, rose to be High Priest of the Sun at On. His mother being royal, he was obviously a possible candidate for the throne when Shepseskaf died ; and as soon as the shadowy Iemhotpe was out of the way he was proclaimed Pharaoh, probably at the age of fifty or more.

Userkef, or Userkere as he was afterwards called, only held the throne for seven years, and little is known of the events of the time, though the discovery of his name upon a marble bowl found in the island of Cerigo, off the southern coast of Greece, suggests that he established commercial intercourse with the northern side of the Mediterranean ; yet his reign is one of the important landmarks in Egyptian history because it saw the absolute union between the court and the priesthood of Re, the Sun—a union, however, which is more apparent in the reign of his younger brother and successor, Sahure.

Upon the desert plateau behind the northern outskirts of Memphis, at a point between the Step-Pyramid of Thoser and the Pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty, Sahure caused his own small pyramid to be built ; and beside it he erected a sun-temple which was a sort of grand replica of the temple at On. It was made of gleaming white limestone, and consisted of a large open court having a series of chambers

on either side, the roof of which was supported upon graceful columns, each carved out of a single block of pink granite quarried at the First Cataract.

At the far end of this court there stood a huge limestone platform upon which a great white *benben*, or sun-monument, towered up against the blue sky above the surrounding buildings ; and in front of this was a large altar upon which the sacrifices to the sun were made. Just outside the court there was an artificial pool in which floated two large wooden boats, these being representations of the vessels wherein the sun of the morning and afternoon was supposed to sail across the heavens : they were dug out of the engulfing sand in modern times, and are now in the Cairo Museum.

Upon the walls of this sun-temple there were sculptures in bas-relief representing events in the Pharaoh's reign, these including the despatch of a fleet to the coast of Syria, probably for the purpose of obtaining the much-esteemed cedar-wood from the forests of the Lebanon. Only fragments of these sculptures now remain, but from other sources some of the king's activities are known. Amongst these may be mentioned the despatch of an expeditionary force to Sinai, where the copper-mines were situated, to punish the marauding Bedouin tribesmen ; and the sending of an expedition up into Lower Nubia, between the First and Second Cataracts, to chastise the unruly negroes.

It was usual in ancient Egypt for the Pharaoh to reward his friends by having their tombs or mortuary monuments made for them at his expense, the welfare of a man's spirit being quite as important as his comforts and honours in this life ; and an instance of this custom is provided by the discovery of a ' false-door '

—that is to say, a sham doorway of stone through which the spirit came out of the sepulchre to receive the food-offerings—made by this Pharaoh for the tomb of his Chief Physician, in the cemetery behind Memphis.

The inscription tells us that this doorway was made at the king's orders by the expert craftsmen of the temple of Ptah at Memphis, and that the work was officially inspected every day. When it was finished, the physician proudly tells us, "his Majesty said to me : 'As these my nostrils enjoy health (through your skill) and as the gods love me, may you depart to your last resting-place in honour and at an advanced age.' Therefore I thanked the King greatly, and praised every god for Sahure's sake, for he understands the desires of all his court. . . . And if you love Re, you too will praise every god for Sahure's sake, who did this for me."

The short reigns of Kherenefere and Shepseskere-Isesi followed, these two being perhaps the son and grandson of Sahure ; but very little is known about them, and the only outstanding event appears to have been a trading expedition sent by Isesi to the land of Pount, in the neighbourhood of Somaliland, the legendary home of the ancestors of Egypt's nobility. This must have been a very hazardous and difficult undertaking. First of all, the troops had to make their way across the desert from the Nile to the Red Sea ; there they had to build their ships upon the uninhabited coast ; after this they had to sail some twelve or fourteen hundred miles along a desolate shore, where water was scarce ; and finally they had to establish friendly relations with the nervous and suspicious natives of Pount. The expedition was led by an officer named Beurded, and the rewards bestowed

upon him by the Pharaoh were so exceptional that they were mentioned as such in the reign of King Piop of the Sixth Dynasty, as we shall see.

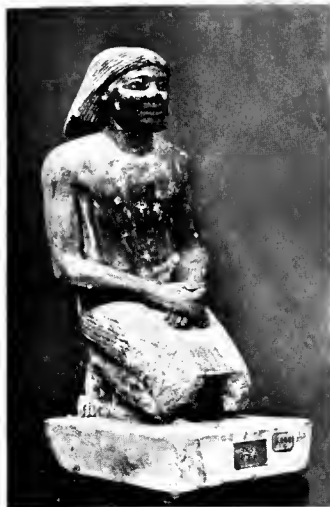
This far country was famous for its myrrh and fragrant gums used in the making of incense and scents ; and the expedition returned with such a huge supply that for many years to come the sanctuaries of the gods throughout Egypt must have been heavy with the perfumed smoke which priests in all ages have so highly esteemed. Other costly things were also brought back, amongst which mention is made of two or three thousand walking-sticks of ebony or some other valuable wood.

Upon the death of Isesi without a grown heir, the throne reverted to the younger brother of Userkef and Sahure, a prince named Neferirkere, who was nearly seventy years of age, yet lived on into his late eighties, and built himself a pyramid and temple beside those of his brothers.

An incident which occurred in this reign, and which is recorded in the tomb of the Pharaoh's Prime Minister, Weshptah, is worthy of mention here because of its human interest. One day the king and the royal family were being conducted around some building-works by this old minister, when suddenly, while the Pharaoh was speaking, "his Majesty noticed that Weshptah did not hear him". Realizing that the aged man had had a stroke, the king arranged for him to be carried to the palace ; "and his Majesty ordered a medical book to be brought, but this revealed to his Majesty that Weshptah's case was hopeless, and thereat the heart of his Majesty was exceedingly sad, beyond everything ; and his Majesty, saying that he would do everything according to his heart's desire, retired



STATUETTE OF AN UNKNOWN
MAN. FIFTH DYNASTY



A PRIEST AT PRAYER. BEGIN-
NING OF FIFTH DYNASTY



THE SHEIKH-EL-BELED. FOURTH OR
FIFTH DYNASTY

ONE OF THE THREE OR FOUR GREATEST MASTERPIECES
OF EGYPTIAN ART NOW KNOWN

to his private room ". Weshptah died shortly afterwards, and " his Majesty commanded that there be made for him a coffin of wood overlaid with stucco ; . . . and his Majesty caused that the matter be put into writing upon the tomb ".

The next king, who was named Nuserre, was the builder of the pyramid and sun-temple which is still to be seen a mile to the north of Sahure's somewhat similar buildings. Again there is the courtyard enclosing a huge *benben* of the sun, and before it still stands the great altar made of blocks of alabaster, from beneath which runs a stone gutter to carry the blood of the sacrificed oxen to ten alabaster basins let into the pavement. The bas-reliefs in the temple show scenes representing the conquest of Libyan and Syrian enemies, the tribesmen, that is to say, who menaced the western and eastern frontiers of Lower Egypt.

An interesting inscription has been found in the tomb of a certain judge who lived in this reign ; and it may be quoted here as showing how dependent a man felt his spirit to be upon the prayers and offerings of the living, and how important it was that his sepulchre should be respected. " I have made this tomb ", he says, " as my rightful possession, I who have never taken a thing belonging to any other person. Whosoever shall make an offering to me therein, I will do this for him : I will commend him to God for it very highly . . . I have never done anything violent to any man, and, as God loves the truth, I was held in honour by the king "—by which he means to say that any such commendation by him will have great weight in heaven.

" I have made this tomb ", he goes on, " upon the western desert in an undefiled place, there having been

no previous burial of any person therein ; and this I did in order that the property of one, such as I, who has rejoined his soul may be inviolate. As for any person who shall appropriate this tomb as his sepulchre, or shall do damage to it, judgment shall be demanded against him for it from the great god ; for I have made this tomb as my own shelter, I who was honoured by the king who himself presented to me my sarcophagus."

Nuserre was succeeded by a Pharaoh named Menkeure, who again built himself a pyramid and a sun-temple, which have not yet been located, though a fragment of the temple's beautifully executed bas-reliefs has been found. He was succeeded by Dadkere, who is important because he was the first monarch of Egypt to assume the afterwards invariable title, "Son of the Sun-god, Re". By this time it was generally believed that Re had once reigned on earth as a god-king, and was the founder of the royal line ; and Dadkere was at such pains to prove the descent of his dynasty from the sun-god that he caused the names and annals of his predecessors to be tabulated upon a great slab of stone of which two large fragments have been found, as already mentioned in Chapter One.

The Pharaoh was deeply interested in the history of his ancestors, and it was under his patronage that a book of ancient wisdom was written by an aged prince of the royal house named Ptah-hotpe. In the introduction to this book, Ptah-hotpe addresses himself to Dadkere in the following words.

"O king, my lord, grey hairs have come upon me, old age is advancing, and the years of my decline have arrived. Decrepitude has taken the place of vitality, and some new defect descends upon me every day. My eyesight is failing, my ears are stopped, my vigour



FIGURE OF AN UNKNOWN WOMAN.
FIFTH DYNASTY



HEAD OF RENOFR, HIGH PRIEST OF THE
SUN. FROM HIS TOMB AT SAKKARA. FIFTH
DYNASTY

is diminished, my brain is dull, my mouth is dumb and speaks not, my mind forgets and cannot even recall the events of yesterday. Every bone in my body aches, pleasure is turned to discomfort, and the flavour of everything is vanished." He therefore asks to be relieved of his official duties, so that he may prepare this book of "the sayings of those who have known the history of past ages, and in the olden times have heard the word of God".

Two or three of these maxims may here be quoted. "Do not try to frighten people," says one, "for it effects nothing. What God has decreed happens." "If you wish to maintain a lasting friendship in a house to which you are in the habit of going," runs another, "try to avoid talking to the ladies. There are thousands of men who have gone after these beautiful creatures and have been ruined by them, being deluded by their soft bodies, but they have turned into things harder than stone. The pleasure was only for a little moment, and it passed like a dream."

"I commend to you your mother who bore you," he writes. "She it was who sent you to school; and she concerned herself daily about you, giving you food and drink. And now that you are grown up, I beg you turn your eyes to her who gave you birth and who provided all things for you. Do not give her cause to rebuke you or lift up her two hands to God in sorrow; for surely He will hear her complaint."

Finally, he says, "When Death comes, it seizes the baby which is at its mother's breast as well as him who has become an old man. When that messenger comes to you to carry you away, let him find you—*ready*."

The next Pharaoh, Unnos, was the last of the dynasty; and his reign marks a change in the relation-

ship between the court and the priesthood of Re. The custom of building a sun-temple beside the pyramid was abandoned, and the old practice of constructing two tombs, one for the body and one for the spirit, was revived after being in abeyance since the time of Snofru. Unnos was the first king of the dynasty whose name did not incorporate that of Re ; but, on the other hand, he called himself ' Son of Re ', as his predecessor had done.

One of his tombs seems to have been the now ruined structure known to-day as the *Mastaba-el-Firaun*, or ' Pharaoh's Seat ', some distance to the south of the main necropolis of Memphis ; and the other was a smallish pyramid near Thoser's Step-Pyramid. The latter building was examined in modern times, and was found to have been robbed, a few bones being all that was left of Unnos.

Few records of his activities have survived, but the fact that a vase inscribed with his name has been found in the ruins of Byblos, the great maritime city on the coast of Syria, is an indication that his fame was known in far lands. His reign lasted thirty years, and when he died in 2587 B.C., the Fifth Dynasty came to an end.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Dynasties

THE first king of the Sixth Dynasty was named Toti (or Teti), but who he was or what connection, if any, he had with the previous line, is unknown. Curiously enough, we can in his case look at the actual face of a Pharaoh who reigned four thousand five hundred years ago, for his death-mask has been found—that is to say, the mould of his features taken immediately after his death ; and thus, though in statuary we have the likenesses of previous kings, this is the earliest Pharaoh of whom we may say that we have seen the man himself. Of his mummified body only a few fragments have been found in his robbed pyramid in the necropolis of Memphis.

In the pyramids of this dynasty, and, in fact, in that of his predecessor Unnos also, the walls of the burial chamber are inscribed with long chapters of a kind of ritual for the dead which evidently had come down from the remotest ages. In these weird old scriptures there is a great deal of purely magical matter by the recitation of which the Pharaoh's soul was supposed to be able to protect itself and assert its rights in the next world ; but there are also some very splendid and dramatic passages in which the king's immortality is insisted upon, and he is said to have been reunited with the sun-god whose son and representative he was on earth.

“The king is not dead,” the impressive words declare ; “he has become one who rises like the morning sun from the eastern horizon. He rests from life like the setting sun in the west, but he will dawn anew in the east. Have you said, that he would die ?—nay, he dies not. He is the sun : he lives for ever. O lofty one amongst the imperishable stars !—you shall not ever perish. Men fall, and their name ceases to be ; but Re takes hold of this king by his hand, and leads him to the sky, that he may not die on earth amongst men.”

“This king flies away from you, you mortals. He is not of the earth : he is of the sky. He flies as a cloud to the sky ; he goes up to heaven like the hawks, and his feathers are like those of the wild geese. He rushes at heaven like a stork ; he kisses heaven like the falcon ; he leaps to heaven like the locust. He ascends to the sky ! He ascends to the sky on the wind, on the wind ! The clouds of the sky have taken him up ; he has ascended upon the rain-cloud.”

“He is a flame rising on the wings of the wind to the boundaries of the firmament. The stairs of the sky are let down for him that he may ascend thereon to heaven. O gods, put your arms under the king : raise him, lift him to the sky. To the sky ! To the sky ! To the great throne of Re amongst the gods ! The double doors of heaven are opened ; the double doors of the sky are thrown open. O Re, your son has come to you ! Gather him to your heart, enfold him in your arms. O King, O Pure-one, take your place in the barque of the sun, and travel across the sky ! Sail with the imperishable stars, sail with the unwearied stars !”

After a short reign Toti was assassinated by his own bodyguard ; and the above-mentioned cast of his face

which was then made shows him to have been still a young man. He left a son who was only a child, and the throne was seized by a usurper, Userkere by name ; but six years later the rightful heir obtained the crown. He was called Piop (generally misread Pepy), and, on his accession, took the additional name Meryre.

The Sixth Dynasty is often described as that in which the feudal age of Egyptian history began, for there arose at this time several princely families whose power in their own provinces was only limited by their allegiance to the royal house. Almost every provincial capital had its prince who lived for the most part in his principality, only occasionally travelling by boat to Memphis to pay his respects to his sovereign. Even the tombs of these great noblemen were no longer built around the Pharaoh's pyramid, but were hewn out of the cliffs near their own cities.

The king's interests and his government were not nearly so centralized ; and as a consequence the erection of temples and other buildings became general throughout the country, his name being found again and again from the sea to Lower Nubia amongst the ruins disinterred by modern excavators. At the old Hawk-capital of Nekhen a magnificent life-size statue of him has been discovered, made of copper, the eyes being inlaid in obsidian and white limestone : it is now corroded and green, and parts of it are missing, but once it was burnished and dazzling and must have been viewed with awe and wonder by the people of this ancient city.

His pyramid in the necropolis of Memphis is somewhat bigger than those of Toti and Unnos, the length of each side at the base being two hundred and forty feet ; but when it was entered in modern times the

black basalt sarcophagus was found to have been smashed open by ancient robbers, and only a few bones were left.

During this reign there was a great scandal at court, and the Queen was put upon her trial, though what was the charge against her is not known. A certain high official named Uni, who was then steward of the Royal Household, took the evidence in secret, and was so proud of the fact that he recorded it in the biographical inscription which has been found in his tomb. Uni also tells us that he organized a campaign against the tribesmen of the eastern desert ; and he proudly states that not one of the soldiers engaged in the expedition ever robbed a civilian or stole food from any of the villages through which they passed.

Piop-Meryre was succeeded by his son, a sickly child of about seven years of age, named Merenre ; and some details of the reign are found in the biography of the above-mentioned Uni who had now been appointed ' Governor of the South ', and who tells us that he governed so firmly and justly that not a single village or family quarrelled with its neighbour.

Uni was chiefly engaged in supervising the quarrying of granite and other ornamental stone for the king's pyramid and for the numerous buildings which were being erected at this time. He was sent up to the First Cataract, he tells us, to obtain the block of granite from which the royal sarcophagus was to be made, another block to form the cap of the pyramid, and yet other blocks to be used in making doorways, altars, and fittings for the pyramid of the Queen-Mother.

Then he was sent to the alabaster quarries near the modern Tell el-Amarna to obtain a huge block of alabaster for an altar in the king's mortuary temple ;

and he states that the work was accomplished in seventeen days, during which he also built the boat in which the colossal block was to be floated down the Nile. After this he was ordered to cut five fairways through the rocks of the First Cataract so that the timber-vessels coming down from Lower Nubia might pass in safety over the rapids.

But Uni's achievements were put into the shade by those of his successor in office, a certain Herkhuf, who was a native of Elephantine, the city at the foot of the First Cataract, and whose tomb there contains a record of his activities. This inscription, which was so placed that all could read it who came to visit the sepulchre, begins with a preamble intended to impress the visitor and to encourage prayers to be made for his spirit.

"In my day", he says, "I belonged to this city, and it was there that I built my house, and dug a lake in its garden, and planted trees around it. The king honoured me ; my father made a will in my favour ; I was a man of worth, beloved of his father, blessed by his mother, and loved by all his brothers. I gave bread to the hungry, and clothing to the naked, and him who possessed no boat I ferried across the river. . . . I spoke pleasant things and repeated only what was agreeable. Never did I tell to a man in power anything evil against any other persons, nor say anything in such a way that a son was deprived of his father's inheritance ; for I desired that it might be well with me in the presence of the great God."

Herkhuf then describes three expeditions made by him into those almost unknown regions above the Second Cataract which were still spoken of as the Land of Ghosts, and from which he returned with large supplies of incense, ivory, ebony, panther-skins, and

other Ethiopian products ; but his fourth expedition, which was more important, was made in the next reign and will be mentioned presently. These earlier expeditions led to the arrangement of a *durbar* at the First Cataract at which the negro chieftains and princes should be introduced to the Pharaoh, who was still a boy of only eleven years of age ; but shortly after this ceremony the young king became ill, and he died on the return journey to Memphis.

He was buried in his pyramid in the Memphite cemetery, and in modern times his fairly well-preserved body was found therein. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Piop Neferkere, who was only six years of age and whose reign of over ninety years was by far the longest in Egyptian history.

A few months after the new Pharaoh's accession Herkhuf returned from his fourth expedition into the Sudan, bringing with him a negro pigmy or dwarf who, in his native wilds, had been trained to dance ; and Herkhuf at once wrote to his young sovereign telling him about this strange little personage. The reply which he received, and which he reproduces in his biographical inscription, vividly reveals the personality of the little boy who now sat upon the throne of the Pharaohs. The royal letter was no doubt dictated with the help of the Queen-Mother, and it reads as follows :

“ I have noted the contents of your letter which you sent to me, the king, at the palace, so that I should know that you have returned safely from the Sudan with the troops which were with you. You have said in your letter that you have brought back from the Land of Ghosts a pigmy of (the kind employed there in) the sacred dances ; and you have said to my

majesty : ‘ Never before has one like him been brought back by any other who has reached those lands ’. . . .

“ Come northward to the court at once, and bring with you this pigmy of the sacred dances whom you have brought alive and in good condition and health from the Land of Ghosts, to please and delight the heart of the king. When he goes aboard the ship with you, appoint trustworthy people who shall remain near him on each side of the vessel ; and take care that he does not fall into the water. When he sleeps at night, appoint trustworthy people who shall sleep beside him in his cabin ; and make an inspection ten times a night. My majesty wants to see this pigmy more than all the gifts from the mines of Sinai or from the land of Pount. If, when you arrive at court, this pigmy is alive and in good condition and health my majesty will do for you a greater thing even than that which was done for Beurded (the leader of the expedition to Pount) in the time of King Isesi, because of the heart’s desire of my majesty to see this pigmy.”

A certain Sebni, who ultimately succeeded Herkhuf as Governor of the South, has left a record of his adventures in Lower Nubia. His home was at Elephantine, and one day he received news there that his father had been murdered at some place near the Second Cataract, whereupon he at once went up into this hostile region in search of the body, taking with him a hundred donkeys loaded with commodities to be given to the natives in return for their help. After encountering all sorts of perils he was successful in finding the body, and having placed it in a temporary coffin, he conveyed it homewards on a donkey’s back, bravely making his way through districts which were notorious for their savagery.

Near the modern Korosko he was met by a relief-ship, specially sent up by the Pharaoh who had heard with admiration of Sebni's dutiful action. On this ship came expert embalmers, bringing with them everything necessary for their work ; and there were priests and professional mourners to conduct the customary rites. The dead man was ultimately buried in a tomb near that of Herkhuf ; and Sebni had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from the king which said : " As a reward for this great deed, and because you have recovered your father's body, I, the king, will do for you every excellent thing." Sebni then went down to Memphis, where the Pharaoh presented him with several acres of land from the royal estates, a beautiful chest containing jars of perfume, a wardrobe of clothes, some bars of gold, and a generous store of food.

Some years later the Pharaoh decided to send an expedition to the land of Pount, and for this purpose he despatched a body of soldiers, sailors, and shipwrights to build the necessary vessels upon the shores of the Red Sea. Here, however, the force was overwhelmed and massacred by Bedouin tribesmen ; and when the news of the disaster reached the court the king despatched another officer—who was, like Herkhuf and Sebni, a native of Elephantine—to recover the bodies and to chastise the Arabs, a task which he successfully accomplished.

Sebni was succeeded in his office of Governor of the South by a certain Ibi, prince of the province which corresponds to the modern Assiout. In his tomb near that place this personage has left an inscription in which he records his virtues and says : " I was my father's eldest son, his beloved, his favourite, dear to

his heart." He then adds this rather touching postscript : " And now I have arranged to be buried in the same tomb with my father, so that I may be in one place with him ; not, however, because I am not in a position to make a second tomb, but in order that I may see my father every day and be with him always."

The enormously long reign of Piop-Neferkere was a disaster for the dynasty, for in the end, at his great age, he was unable to control the powerful provincial princes, and the country was in a state of rebellion during his last years. He was succeeded by a monarch who only held the throne for one year, and at his death in 2458 B.C., complete anarchy ensued.

For six years there was no Pharaoh at all, but at last, in 2452 B.C., a king named Neterkere was established upon the throne by a group of nobles, and founded the Seventh Dynasty. He was murdered, however, after a short reign, and was succeeded by his sister Nitokri (the Nitokris of the Greeks), about whom a curious story, which may be based on fact, was current in later times.

The Queen made up her mind to avenge her brother's death, and with this object in view she invited those nobles who had been concerned in the murder to attend the inaugural ceremony at a temple which she had erected on low-lying ground near the Nile. Having beguiled them down into the crypt, she suddenly closed the trap-door upon them, let the water in, and drowned them all. Later she ended her own life by shutting herself in a room full of charcoal fumes.

She was succeeded by three shadowy Pharaohs of whom nothing is known but their names ; and in 2377 B.C. the dynasty came to an end. Then followed the Eighth Dynasty which survived for just over a

hundred years, and consisted of eighteen or nineteen kings, not one of whom is more than a name to us. The whole country was in turmoil, and there was evidently no central government at any time which could command the allegiance of all the provinces.

The arts and crafts deteriorated, the temples fell into disrepair, and the old tombs and pyramids were violated and robbed. It is usual to speak of the whole period from the beginning of the First Dynasty in 3407 B.C. to the close of this Eighth Dynasty in 2270 B.C. as the Old Kingdom, and the succeeding period as the Middle Kingdom ; and certainly this chaotic century ended the old order. The grand Egypt of the classical age which rose to fame during the First and Second Dynasties, was at the height of its glory during the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Dynasties, and sank during the Seventh and Eighth Dynasties, constitutes a definite epoch, and if we omit this last century and a half of its collapse it represents a round thousand years of prosperity, ordered life, and enormous achievement.

Even in the brief outline of the story as told in the foregoing pages certain characteristics of the ancient Egyptians will have become apparent. They were an exceptionally happy and contented people, more humane than other nations, and always proud of their virtues. They were deeply religious, and had so clear a consciousness of right and wrong and of what was good or evil in the sight of the gods, that their behaviour was characterized by a real effort to obey the laws of gods and men, and to stand well in the eyes of both.

They were good citizens, easily governed, and peacefully inclined. They were intensely conservative ;

and having formulated a code of manners and behaviour, they were strict in its observance. The canons of art, established in the Third and Fourth Dynasties, were maintained with extreme care ; and though each generation produced its outstanding masterpieces, the bulk of the work is standardized upon a level of excellence, and can only be adversely criticized for its sameness and conventionality.

Life at court and in the houses of the nobles was cultured, clean, and splendid ; there was little poverty amongst the lower classes, and not much oppression ; and the middle classes, the *bourgeoisie*, were pleasantly comfortable. The Egyptians were then, as they are to-day, bureaucratic and lovers of officialdom ; and nearly every man of any standing held some sort of position in the government or in the priesthood.

Every town had its local god, but recognized most of the gods of other towns as well. Ptah, for instance, was the chief god of Memphis, and his worshippers believed that all things emanated from his mind and that he was the creator even of the other gods ; but across the Nile at On the sun-god Re was the sole creator. Yet somehow the different beliefs were reconciled, and, except in early times, religious quarrels were infrequent. There were endless festivals of the gods, and the services in the temples were a part of the daily life, particularly since the priests were married men.

In any modern study of the ancient Egyptians the great attention given by them to the burial of the dead and to the welfare of the spirit seems to stand out beyond all else ; but this was not actually the case. Most Egyptian cemeteries in Upper Egypt are situated on the edge of the desert, and the tombs have been

preserved by the dry conditions and by the fact that the land was not needed for other purposes ; but the houses and palaces were usually built on cultivable ground, and were soon lost. Thus the things pertaining to the dead have survived in far larger quantities than those belonging to the living, with the result that death incorrectly seems to us to have been given more consideration by the old Egyptians than life.

It is true that the most careful provision was made for the spirits of the dead, that the preservation of the body by mummification was developed in fairly early times, and that a comfortable tomb which should be the home of the spirit and to which food-offerings might be brought was considered to be an absolute necessity. Yet in their domestic and social life the Egyptians were the gayest and most light-hearted of people. They loved the good things of this world—their houses and gardens, their clothes and jewellery, their food, wine and beer, their games and sports, their music and dancing, and so forth ; and, indeed, their attitude may well be summed up in one of the poems which, though of a later date, is characteristic :

“That which hath come into being must pass away again. The young men and maidens go to their destined places ; the sun riseth at dawn and setteth again in the hills of the west. Men beget and women conceive. The children, too, go to the places which are appointed for them. O, then, be happy ! Come, scents and perfumes are set before thee, and flowers for the arms and neck of thy beloved. Come, songs and music are before thee. Set behind thee all cares ; think only upon gladness, until that day cometh whereon thou shalt go down to the land which loveth silence.”

CHAPTER SIX

The Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Dynasties

THE Ninth Dynasty arose out of the chaos of the Eighth and was established in 2271 B.C. by King Wahkere Akhtoi, whose capital was the old city of the Reed-kings, Eheninsi, about seventy miles south of the apex of the Delta. Later tradition described him as a terrible tyrant who in the end "was seized with madness and was devoured by a crocodile"; but there is no historical material by which we can judge him, and all that can be said is that he was sufficiently powerful to re-establish a strong government in the northern half of Egypt.

Meanwhile, in the south, a prince of the city of Was (the Thebes of the Greeks and the Luxor of to-day) proclaimed himself Pharaoh under the name Wahenkh Intef, but appears to have acknowledged the northern monarch as his overlord. This southern sovereign was the founder of the Eleventh Dynasty—a dynasty which remained the vassal of the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties for the next seventy-five years until, at the fall of the Tenth Dynasty in the north, the kings of this southern Eleventh Dynasty became Pharaohs of all Egypt.

King Wahenkh Intef reigned at Thebes for fifty years, and during that same period the four kings who constituted the Ninth Dynasty and whose names were Wahkere Akhtoi, Meryibre Akhtoi, Nebkeure

Akhtoi, and Merykere Akhtoi, all reigned and died at Eheninsi. But during the reign of the third Akhtoi the southern king revolted, and for some years there was war between them.

The revolt was caused by some action on the part of Akhtoi which, afterwards, he frankly admitted to have been unjust ; and, in fact, the war ended with a mutual agreement which seems to indicate that the two monarchs—the overlord and the vassal—had the greatest respect for one another.

Akhtoi was a cultured, thoughtful man, very religious, rather gloomy, and very much of a fatalist. Intef was a just and upright man of little culture but evidently of much common sense, who ruled his southern realms in patriarchal manner and was proud to declare in his mortuary inscription that though he was “ rich in possessions, like a flood ”, he had never done violence to any one of his people nor taken anybody’s property from him. He was so devoted to his dogs, whose names were Gazelle, Greyhound, Black, and Saucepan (or Fire-Pot), that he caused them to be represented upon his tombstone.

At the time when he revolted, the northern frontier of his vassal kingdom was situated just to the south of the old capital of Theni, where the earliest kings were buried and where the god Osiris was worshipped as patron of the dead ; but the southerners soon captured this sacred city, the loss of which was deeply felt by Akhtoi, who, however, regarded it as a judgment upon him for the unjust action already mentioned, whatever it was.

After the war was over Akhtoi wrote a long letter of advice and instruction to his son and heir ; and this document was so highly esteemed that it became one

of the Egyptian literary classics. Fortunately a copy has survived, and some of the royal advice may here be quoted.

"Be diplomatic in speech", he says, "in order that you may gain your point; for the tongue is a sword to a king, and speech is more powerful than any armaments, none being able to circumvent a clever speaker. . . . Make a lasting monument for yourself in your subjects' love of you; but strengthen your frontiers, for it is good to be prepared for future events. Respect a life of energy, for self-complacency will make a wretched man of you; yet a fool is he who is greedy of what others possess. This life upon earth passes: it is not long, and fortunate is he who is remembered. The possession of a million men will not avail a king in this regard, but the memory of a good man shall live for ever."

"Put not your faith in length of years, for the gods of the Judgment Hall regard a lifetime as but an hour. The man himself still remains after he has reached the haven of Death, and his deeds are laid beside him as his only treasure. Eternal is the existence yonder, and a fool is he who makes light of it. Do justice that your name may endure for ever. Comfort the mourner; oppress not the widow; expel no man from the possessions of his father. Take care that you do not punish wrongfully. Do not kill, for it does not profit you. Uprightness of heart befits a king, and it is the interior of the palace that inspires the outside world with fear."

"Slay not any man that is about you, for God, in whose care he is, commends him to you. Instil the love of yourself in all the land. A good character is that which is remembered. Do not make any dis-

inction between the son of a noble and one of humble birth ; but take a man to you because of his merits. Let not your hands be idle, but do your work joyfully. Indolence would ruin heaven itself."

" Rule men as the flocks of God, for He made heaven and earth according to their liking. They are His own images, proceeding from Him, and He rises in heaven according to their desire. At their behest He made the dawn, and He sails by in order to see them. When they weep He hears. He made for them the grass and the cattle : fowl and fish also to nourish them. He knows every man by name."

In speaking of the war with the south, and the loss of sacred Theni, he writes thus : " A calamity occurred in my time, for the region of Theni was invaded. It happened, indeed, through my own fault : I knew it after it was over, and knew that I had been paid back for what I had done. Nay, but weak is he and no good man who glosses over the evil he has wrought, who makes light of what he has done, or improves it into something good. Take warning by it : a blow is answered by a blow—that is the rule in all that is done. . . . Deal not unkindly with the southern lands. They did not cause the trouble : they were in the right, as they said."

The succeeding king, to whom these words were addressed, did not reign long, and when he died without an heir in 2221 B.C., a new but shadowy line, which is called the Tenth Dynasty, was established. At about the same time the old vassal king, Wahrenkh Intef, died at Thebes, and was succeeded by another Intef, the second monarch of the Eleventh Dynasty, who, in his turn, was followed by a king named Senkhibtoui Mentuhotpe ; and it was at the close of the reign of this

southern monarch, in about 2196 B.C., that the Tenth Dynasty in the north ended its rule in complete anarchy, leaving nothing behind but the names of nine upstart kings not one of whom had held the throne for more than a year or two.

A document has been preserved which gives an account of the condition of the north at this time. "Men have dared to rebel against the Crown," it says ; "a few lawless men have attempted to rid the land of its monarchy. The poor of the land have made themselves rich, and the property-owners have been bereft of everything. Servants have given up doing their work. Women-servants have become free with their tongues, and when their mistresses speak to them they show their annoyance. The mistresses say, 'Would that we had something to eat !' ; for the paupers are now the owners of the good things. The well-dressed are in rags ; and he who had no bread now owns a granary."

"The children of princes are dashed against the walls. The families of the nobles are cast out into the streets. The wealthy are in mourning, the poor are making merry. Every city says : 'Let us suppress those in authority over us.' The distracted man says : 'If I knew where God is, I would pray to Him.' Right still exists throughout the land in name, yet what men do, in appealing to it, is Wrong. The old order has perished. There is no end of noise, yet laughter has ceased, and it is groaning and weeping that fills the land. Great and small say : 'Would that I might die !'—and little children say : 'He ought never to have caused me to live.' The Palace has been overthrown in a minute : the King has been turned out by the mob."

“The robber is everywhere. Gates, columns, and walls are consumed by fire ; boxes of ebony are smashed to pieces, and precious acacia-wood is chopped up. Princes are hungry and in distress ; noble ladies go hungry, and their limbs are in sad plight by reason of their rags ; men eat grass and wash it down with water. There is squalor throughout the land, and there is none whose linen is white in these times. The books of law are thrown out of the court-houses, and men tread upon them in the public places. Offices are rifled ; officials are murdered, and their documents carried off. All is in ruins.”

The writer of this account closes with a very arresting passage in which he prophesies the coming of a divine Saviour “who shall bring coolness to that which is fevered”. “He shall be the Shepherd of His people, and in Him there shall be no sin. When His flocks are scattered He shall spend the day in gathering them together.” The similarity of the wording to that used in the Biblical prophecies is interesting, and tends to show how the minds of religious thinkers in different countries in times of distress move in a similar direction.

The desired relief came, however, in an unexpected manner. In the south, King Mentuhotpe seized the opportunity to extend his power ; and he speedily overwhelmed the north. He appears to have died during the campaign ; but his successor, Nebheptre Mentuhotpe, was able to proclaim himself Pharaoh of all Egypt, and thus his native city of Thebes became for the first time the capital of the whole country.

Thebes was magnificently situated, and in the natural beauty of its setting was perhaps the most favoured city in the whole country. It stood upon the east bank of the Nile, backed by wide fields and

palm-groves over which the eye travelled to the distant hills of the eastern desert. In the opposite direction, across the broad river, there was only a mile of green fields separating the sandbanks beside the water from the bare gravel and rocks at the foot of the tremendous cliffs and precipices of the western desert ; and here the panorama was majestic and enthralling to the eye.

When the prevalent north-west wind was blowing strongly the wide river was sometimes beaten into little waves, and the trees on either side swayed and rustled, while overhead in the deep blue of the skies hundreds of kites—the big scavenger-birds so common throughout Egypt—soared and swooped like seagulls, uttering their plaintive cry. But on windless days, when the surface of the river was like a mirror, the fields and trees like a painted picture, and the sun-bathed hills lifted the eyes to the cloudless heavens, the whole landscape had the ineffable quality of a dream.

Both at Thebes and at Karnak, a short distance down-stream, there had been small towns in existence for some centuries ; but it was only now that Thebes developed into a great city and Karnak into an important centre of the worship of the local god Amen or Ammon, ‘ the Hidden-one ’. Wahenkh Intef, the founder of the dynasty, had said in his mortuary-inscription : “ I filled Amen’s temples with splendid chalices, I built shrines, constructed their stairways, restored their gates, and established their holy sacrifices,” until the city was “ like a sea, dazzling in splendour ” ; and now Nebheptre Mentuhotpe continued the work with a view to making his native place a worthy capital of all Egypt, and his palace there the magnificent winter-residence of his royal line.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

The arts and crafts had remained at a low level here in the south since the fall of the Sixth Dynasty, but now sculptors and architects were brought from the north, where the ancient canons had to some extent been maintained, and as a result the work of this period rapidly improved.

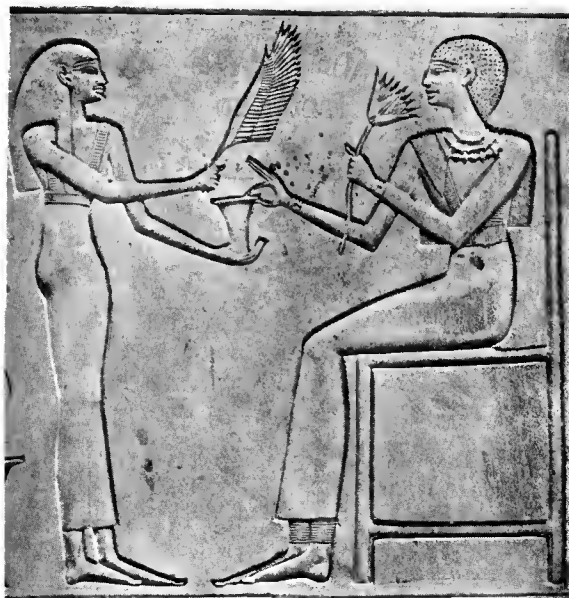
At the foot of the towering hills of the desert on the western side of the river, opposite the city, in that awe-inspiring amphitheatre of cliffs now known as Dêr el-Bahri, the Pharaoh caused the tombs of six of his wives to be constructed, each sepulchre being a rock-hewn chamber containing a sarcophagus, and having a masonry shrine in front of it entered through a wooden door. These tombs have been excavated in modern times, and the mummies of some of the ladies have been found, together with a great quantity of perfectly preserved linen sheets and some beautiful jewellery.

At Denderah, to the north of Thebes, the tombstone of a certain Steward of a queen of this period was found, upon which he speaks of this lady as being "learned in writing, and eminent in the works of science in the great library of the South". He speaks of her own private collection of books, and says : "I made extensions to the collection, enriching it with stacks of valuable matter, so that it was not wanting in anything within the scope of my knowledge of things. I organized it, I restored what I found decayed, I tied up the manuscripts which I found loose, and I arranged what I found confused."

The tomb of this Pharaoh has not been identified with certainty ; but his successor Nebhapatre Mentuhotpe built himself a magnificent pyramid-tomb just in front of the row of tombs of the above-mentioned six queens, and close under the echoing cliffs. This white



ON THE WAY TO THE TEMPLE OF DÊR EL-BAHRI, THEBES



THE PHARAOH'S CONCUBINE AND HER MAID. RELIEF
ON THE SIDE OF A LIMESTONE SARCOPHAGUS FOUND
IN A SHRINE DATING FROM THE REIGN OF NEBHEPTRE
MENTUHOTPE

[To face p. 68

limestone pyramid was some sixty feet square at the base, and around it was a triple colonnade surrounded by a wall about a hundred and forty feet square, outside which, again, was a double row of pillars. All this stood upon a platform of rock, up to which a sloping causeway ascended.

Behind the pyramid, between it and the cliffs, was a courtyard flanked by a pillared arcade, and in the middle was the mouth of a great, square-cut tunnel descending in a long, sloping passage through the rock to the burial chamber in which stood an alabaster shrine. Since no trace of the actual burial was found when the place was excavated in modern times, it is possible that this was the king's cenotaph and not his real tomb ; for it will be remembered that in earlier times a Pharaoh often constructed two tombs for himself, one being for the spirit.

In the wide and level area of gravel and broken rocks in front of these buildings a great forecourt was laid out in which groves of sycamore-fig trees were planted, each tree growing in a circular hole cut in the rock and filled with earth ; and finally a straight, paved road and avenue of trees and statues was made, leading from the fields beside the Nile to these wonderful mortuary buildings. In the cliffs to right and left of the forecourt were the rock-hewn tombs of the most prominent nobles of the time, in many of which the modern excavators have found rich treasures.

This Pharaoh, whose reign marks the zenith of the Eleventh Dynasty, occupied the throne for over forty-six years, and was succeeded by Senkhkere Mentuhotpe, whose most important achievement seems to have been the sending of an expedition to the land of Pount. This expedition was placed under the command of an

officer named Henu, who tells us how in crossing the desert to the Red Sea he had to fight with the Bedouin tribesmen ; how every one of his three thousand soldiers had a daily ration of twenty loaves of bread and two jars of water ; how the ships were built and launched with great sacrifices and burnt-offerings ; and how the long voyage was successfully accomplished, and a vast store of incense brought home.

The prosperity of the reign was marred by a famine due to the failure of the Nile to rise to its accustomed levels ; and some private letters have come to light which reveal how difficult it was to obtain provisions. In one of these letters a certain landowner who was staying in the north of Egypt writes to his mother in the south : “ How are you ? Do not worry about me. I am alive and well, but the whole land is dead from hunger. I have obtained you your provisions as well as possible, but is not the Nile very low ? Do not be angry at the small amount : to be half-alive is better than to die outright.”

To his son he writes : “ You must give food to my people while they are doing work. Mind this ! And make the most of my land. Dig the ground with your noses in the work. Be active, for, remember, you are eating my bread, and it is lucky that I can support you at all. If any one of my people spurns these provisions let him come to me here and stay with me and live as *I* am living—not that there is any one who will do so ! ”

The reign ended before the Pharaoh's tomb and mortuary buildings were completed ; and he was succeeded by Nebtoure Mentuhotpe who was the last of the dynasty, and whose brief tenure of the throne was overshadowed by the ever-increasing power of his

THE NINTH, TENTH AND ELEVENTH DYNASTIES

Prime Minister, a personage named Amenemhet. In official inscriptions this Amenemhet describes himself in such grandiose terms that one can see in him the real ruler of the land. "Hereditary Prince, Governor of the City, Chief Justice, Chief of Works," he calls himself, "favourite of the king, great in rank, having front place in the palace, him to whom the great come bowing low, and before whom all people prostrate themselves flat upon their stomachs."

At one time he took an expedition to the quarries of Wady Hammamât, in the eastern desert, to obtain stone for his sovereign ; and here he has left a record of the works he carried out. But meanwhile affairs in Lower Egypt were in a very bad way. Roving Arab tribesmen had begun to infest the lands near the eastern frontier, and on the western side of the Delta other tribesmen from the Libyan desert were raiding the Egyptian fields. As in the previous reign the Nile was low, and the famine had continued. There had been disorders and rebellions ; and the general condition of the north was almost as desperate as it was in the days of the Tenth Dynasty.

At this juncture, in 2111 B.C., the Pharaoh died or was dethroned, and the great Prime Minister Amenemhet seized the crown, thereby bringing the Eleventh Dynasty to a close and establishing the Twelfth Dynasty.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Twelfth Dynasty

THE new Pharaoh, Sehotpeibre Amenemhet, as he called himself, or Amenemhet the First, as he is now termed, was favoured by fortune, for the first Nile-flood after his accession proved to be bounteous, the subsequent crops were excellent, and the famine came to an end. He at once gave his attention to the restoration of order in Lower Egypt ; and in pursuit of this object he deported all Bedouin and other Semitic tribesmen who had drifted in from the east and had settled upon Egyptian soil. He then built a great wall along the edge of the desert on this eastern side of the Delta, like the Roman wall which passes across the north of Britain, or the Great Wall of China, his object being, as he afterwards said, "to prevent the tribesmen from entering Egypt even to ask for water for their cattle".

It is very possible that amongst the foreigners who were then deported was the Biblical patriarch Abraham, whose historicity is undoubted, and the accepted date of whose departure from Egypt closely coincides with that of the building of this wall. In the Hebrew tradition the ages of Abraham and Sarah are of course fanciful, for people naturally lived to about the same age then as they do now under similar conditions ; but with due allowance for the exag-

generations which are bound to creep in when history is handed on by word of mouth for some centuries before being written down, the Bible story here finds good confirmation.

Amenemhet thought it desirable to transfer his capital from Thebes to a more central point; and having chosen a site near the modern village of Lisht, on the edge of the western desert, some fifteen miles south of Memphis, he there built his military and governmental headquarters and erected his palace, naming the place Itht-toui, "Control of the two lands," i.e. Upper and Lower Egypt. From this fortress city he ruled the whole country with a strong hand, and in a few years brought it back to such prosperity as it had not known since the days of the Sixth Dynasty.

At the time of his accession he was already a man of some fifty years of age, and in the twenty-first year of his reign, probably when he was seventy, he decided to associate his son upon the throne with him, there having been, it would seem, precedents for a coregency of this kind in early times. But just before he announced his intention to do so, an attempt was made upon his life which he himself describes in a poem addressed to his son some years later.

"It was after the evening meal," he writes, "when night had come, and I was taking an hour of heart's ease. Lying upon my couch, I had relaxed, and my mind had begun to follow slumber, when suddenly weapons were drawn and an attack was made upon me, while I, like a snake of the desert, awoke to fight alone." (A line is here missing.) "Quickly seizing their weapons with my hand I hurled back the scoundrels." (Some more lines are missing.) "Now

this abominable thing occurred while I was still without you, my son, and while the court had not yet heard that I had handed over my kingdom to you, nor had I yet sat with you upon the dual throne."

The attempt greatly embittered him and he warned his son to deal sternly with his subjects, to trust no man, and to have no intimate friends. He had good reason for what he said, for during the ten or eleven years of the co-regency there was evidently an undercurrent of unrest; and when at last the old king died, his son, who was away in command of an expedition against the tribesmen of the western desert, had to make a dash back to the palace to prevent a rising.

The name of the new Pharaoh, who had thus already received his training while joint-sovereign, was Kheperkere Sesusri, or Sesusri the First, a name which the Greeks rendered as Sesostris and which Egyptologists have usually read as Senusret. An account of the old king's death and of the events which followed has been preserved in the story of the adventures of a certain member of the royal family named Sinuhe, who feared that he might be suspected of treason and who therefore fled from Egypt.

Amenemhet's death is described thus by Sinuhe: "He flew away up to heaven and was united with the sun, and his divine limbs were absorbed into Him who created him. The palace was hushed and men's hearts were filled with sorrow. Then were the great double doors closed, and the courtiers sat with bowed heads, while the people wept."

"Now his Majesty (Amenemhet) had despatched a large army into the western desert," he goes on, "his eldest son, King Sesusri, being in command of it; but



ONE OF TEN SIMILAR STATUES
OF SENUSRET I. TWELFTH
DYNASTY



PRINCESS ATA'S
DAGGER



PRINCESS KHNUMET'S DIADEM OF GOLD INLAID WITH LAPIS-LAZULI,
CARNELIAN, RED JASPER AND GREEN FELSPAR. CAIRO MUSEUM.

just as he was returning, the nobles at the court sent messengers to inform him of his father's death, and these messengers reached him at the time of evening. Without waiting a moment the Hawk (i.e. King Sesusri) flew away with his suite, without letting the troops know . . . and," Sinuhe adds, "I thought that there would be fighting at the palace."

Sinuhe's subsequent adventures constitute one of the finest tales left to us by ancient Egypt; but only the briefest résumé can here be given. After hiding in the desert for some days and gradually making his way north, he crossed the river in a stolen boat, and travelled onwards until he came to the great wall built by the late king. Here he eluded the sentries, and got away into the Syrian desert, where, just as he was dying of thirst, he was rescued by a desert chieftain who had been in Egypt, and who recognized him and received him hospitably. Thence he passed from one tribe to another, and quite possibly was entertained by Abraham himself, who was just such a tribal chieftain and who was certainly living at this time in those parts.

At last he reached Upper Syria, married the daughter of a local prince, and, adopting Syrian ways and growing a patriarchal beard, lived in that land for many adventurous years, until one day when he was old he received a letter from the Pharaoh, inviting him to return and telling him there had been no reason for him to run away, for nobody had ever really suspected him of treachery. Sinuhe therefore went back to Egypt, where King Sesusri received him like a long-lost brother, gave him new clothes, sent him to the barber to have his beard shaved off, and assigned him a house and an income.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

One of the outstanding events of this reign was a great military expedition into the Sudan, undertaken with the object of conquering the negroes who lived in those regions which had once been regarded as the Land of Ghosts, and placing the Egyptian frontier at the Third Cataract. This object was successfully accomplished, and an Egyptian prince named Hephthcfi was made governor of the new territory, and ultimately died up there and was buried under a great mound which was discovered and excavated in recent years.

The king's building operations were extensive, and throughout Egypt there are ruins of the temples he built, the most important being at On (Heliopolis) where one of his great obelisks still stands: it is a shaft of pink granite in one piece, nearly seventy feet long, quarried at the First Cataract and transported and erected with astounding skill. Work on his pyramid, near Itht-toui, the capital, was begun early in the reign; and in the mortuary temple ten fine statues of the king were found in modern times.

When Sesusri had reached the age of seventy he associated his son on the throne with him, just as he himself had been associated with his father; but the old king died in the fourth year of the co-regency, and his son and partner became sole Pharaoh, under the name Nubkeure Amenemhet, or Amenemhet the Second.

The new monarch chose as the site of his pyramid a lonely spot in the desert some five miles to the south of Thoser's Step-Pyramid in the necropolis of Memphis; but perhaps because his father's great building operations had depleted the treasury, he decided to economize by using sun-dried bricks as

well as stone in its construction, with the result that it was pulled to pieces by treasure-hunters in later ages.

Near the pyramid were the tombs of some of the royal princesses, and in these the modern excavators discovered the gorgeous jewellery which is now the pride of the Cairo Museum. This jewellery includes necklaces of gold and semi-precious stones ; a gold chain from which hang gold shells ; a pendant of gold filigree work in the form of a butterfly ; gold bracelets with sliding clasps ; two beautiful diadems one of which consists of a network of gold threads dotted here and there with little red and blue flowers ; a floral spray, like an aigrette, with gold leaves and blossoms of semi-precious stones ; a gold and jewelled dagger ; and various pieces of the regalia. There is nothing rough or primitive about this jewellery : it is absolutely modern in the perfection of the design and the workmanship ; and it proves that life in Egypt four thousand years ago must have been lived under conditions of exquisite refinement and culture.

This king, like his predecessors, associated his son on the throne with him, but was assassinated when the co-regency was in its seventh year, the sole sovereignty thus devolving upon Khekheperre Sesusri, or Sesusri the Second, a fine-looking man who was more than six feet six inches in height. This Pharaoh's reign was overshadowed by a serious menace from the Sudan, where the black races, conquered by Sesusri the First, had thrown off the Egyptian yoke, had recaptured all the territory south of the Second Cataract, and were threatening an invasion of Egypt itself.

To meet this menace very strong fortifications were built in the south. A great wall of sun-dried bricks

was erected all along the eastern side of the river at the First Cataract, so as to protect the shipping in this difficult section of the Nile, where the vessels had to be hauled up the artificial channels through the rapids or checked by ropes in their downward course. Three strong fortresses were built in Lower Nubia, between the First and Second Cataracts, and another was erected at the modern El Kâb, opposite Nekhen, the old Hawk-capital ; and the mighty walls of all these are to be seen to-day.

All the extreme south of Egypt, in fact, must have been prepared for a black invasion ; and the inhabitants must have been in a continual state of uneasiness and dread lest the negroes should break through. The important chieftains of the Bedouin tribes who inhabited the eastern desert were made much of, so that their friendship and help might be secured ; and in one of the tombs of this period there is a representation of the arrival in Egypt of one of these desert princes, a personage named Abshai, who must have been just such a tribal chieftain as the Biblical Abraham or Jacob, and, indeed, may have been a friend of the latter.

Abshai was accompanied by some thirty-six members of his tribe—men, women and children, and all are shown wearing rich robes of many colours. The men are bearded, and have large Semitic noses, and are armed with bows and spears ; and the women have long, dark hair, and wear shoes—not the ordinary Egyptian sandals—on their feet. The painting, in fact, gives us a very clear idea of the appearance of a household such as that of the early Hebrew patriarchs.

The Pharaoh died before he had reached the age

at which a co-regent was usually appointed ; and he was buried in the pyramid which had been built for him some twenty-five miles south of Itht-toui.

He was succeeded by his son, Khekeure Sesusri, or Sesusri the Third, the greatest monarch of his line, who in the succeeding centuries was remembered as a mighty conqueror and was revered as a god. It was he who put an end to the menace from the south by invading the Sudan and fixing the Egyptian frontier at the Second Cataract ; and several inscriptions give an account of the four separate campaigns he conducted against the negroes.

He built three great fortresses at the new frontier, one on either side of the river, and one on an island in the middle ; and near the modern Wady Halfa, below the Cataract, he erected two more fortresses. The boundary-stone set up at the frontier has been found ; and the inscription upon it states that it was erected "in order to forbid any negro to pass it by water or by land, either with a ship or with any herds of cattle, for ever", except by special permission. Another inscription dating from a few years later reveals by its words the great fear felt for so long by the Egyptians, and their surprise at having been able to conquer the dreaded negroes with such ease.

"These negroes", says the Pharaoh in this inscription, "are not a brave people after all : they are poor and broken in spirit. My majesty has seen them, and it is not a lie. I captured their women, I carried off their subjects, I went forth to their wells, destroyed their cattle, and reaped their grain or burnt it. By my life, and by my father, I speak the truth !—nor is there any lie coming out of my mouth about it." So long, in fact, had the Egyptians shaken in their shoes

at thought of these negroes that the king doubted if he would be believed when he declared them to be quite a feeble folk.

Herodotus speaks of the conquests made by the great 'Sesostris', as he calls him, and says that "he proceeded in a fleet of ships of war from the Red Sea along the shores of the Erythræan (Arabian) Sea, subduing the nations as he went, until he finally reached a sea which could not be navigated because of the shoals, and hence he returned to Egypt". This statement has been confirmed by a broken inscription of later date found at Bubastis, which refers to just such an expedition, and, in one fragment, speaks of the vain attempt to discover a means of navigating some piece of water in the neighbourhood of "the mountains of Hue", somewhere on the coast of the Arabian Sea. Another inscription speaks of an expedition across the frontiers of southern Syria.

Two tombs were made for this great monarch, one being just to the south of the old cemetery of the earliest kings in the desert behind Theni, and the other near the secondary tomb of Snofru, a few miles to the south of the necropolis of Memphis. The first of these was a tunnel-tomb cut into the rock beneath the surface of the desert ; and the other was a pyramid of the usual pattern, surrounded by the sepulchres of some of the royal ladies in which great finds of jewellery were made in modern times.

At a place now called El Bersheh, in the tomb of one of the provincial princes of this reign, there are some important scenes and inscriptions which throw much light on the customs of the time ; and amongst these is the representation of the transport of a colossal seated statue of alabaster, the height of which is stated

THE TWELFTH DYNASTY

to have been some twenty-two feet, which means that it weighed about sixty tons.

It has already been pointed out that the modern idea of the Egyptians sweating and slaving under the cruel lash of the overseers' whips as they dragged these huge weights into position, is quite incorrect. They were a kindly people, and then, as now, their work was performed with much good will and in a spirit of jollity almost unknown in the West. The prince's account of the transport of the above-mentioned colossus may be quoted here in support of this statement.

"The road over which the statue had to come down from the quarries was very difficult," he says ; "and as the dragging of such large things upon it would have been trying to the spirit of the people, I caused a new road to be made for it. Then the strong men said, 'We have come and we will bring it !' at which my heart was glad ; and the townspeople were gathered together happily. Very good it was to see, beyond everything ! Men with strong arms were there, together with the weak ; and there was even one old man amongst the volunteers, who had to lean upon a child. Their spirits were high, their arms grew strong, and each one put forth the strength of a thousand men. Everybody shouted and applauded ; and when we reached the city the people were there in crowds, singing. Very good it was to see, beyond everything !"

Just before his death the king associated his son (?) upon the throne with him, and it was under the name Nemaere Amenemhet that this joint-sovereign presently became sole Pharaoh. In the days of the Greeks, it should be mentioned, the name Nemaere passed into

Lamare(s) by that slurring of *n* into *l* which is sometimes noticed in other words, and thence it slipped into Labari(s) by the change of *m* into *b* which is also not unusual.

Amenemhet the Third, as this Pharaoh is now called, stands out in Egyptian history because of the great engineering works which were undertaken in his time. About fifty miles south of the modern Cairo, in the desert just to the west of the Nile Valley, there is a low-lying area some thirty miles in diameter, which is now called the Fayûm. The waters of the Nile-floods pass into it along a narrow, five-mile neck of fertile land which is an offshoot from the main Valley ; but whereas the Fayûm is now a luxuriant sort of oasis, with a town and several villages in it and a lake at the far end, in ancient times it was one large expanse of marsh and water, deep in flood-time but gradually becoming shallow in spring as the water seeped back.

As early as the Fifth Dynasty part of the near side had been reclaimed by means of dykes, and a town called *Shedet*, which means ' the Reclaimed ', had been built there ; but now Amenemhet and his engineers conceived the idea of turning this whole area into a reservoir, holding the flood-water in it, and letting it out as it was needed. They therefore tapped the Nile some two hundred miles farther up-stream, near the modern Assiout, and dug a canal by which the water could be conveyed direct into this reservoir, thus obtaining at high-Nile a reserve which, when let out through sluices, kept up the water-level in the main Valley during the parched months of late spring and early summer.

The water was retained in the reservoir by means of a great dyke and sluice-gates, and upon this dyke,



HEAD OF A STATUETTE OF AMENEMHET III. TWELFTH DYNASTY



HEAD OF A STATUE OF SENUSRET I
CLOSER VIEW OF HEAD SHOWN IN PLATE VI

[To face p. 82]

THE TWELFTH DYNASTY

at each end, there was a huge statue of the Pharaoh upon a pyramid-shaped base. These two statues, of gleaming white stone, were nearly forty feet high, and their bases twenty feet ; and thus they towered sixty feet above the dyke, which was itself many feet above the water-level. They were still standing in Greek and Roman times, but now they are gone.

This great undertaking must have saved all the northern part of the country from famines due to low Niles ; and there is some reason to suppose that a barrage was erected at the Second Cataract for the benefit of the country farther south—at least, there are flood-levels of this reign marked on the rocks there, and these levels are some thirty feet higher than those of the present day, which looks as though the water had been dammed up at this point.

In this connection a matter of much interest for Biblical students must be mentioned. If the date of Abraham has been correctly fixed at the beginning of this dynasty, then the authentic-looking sequence of subsequent events as given in the Bible narrative must bring us to the reign of Amenemhet the Third as the date of Joseph, who is an undoubtedly historical character ; and thus Joseph may have helped in the carrying out of these works, as, indeed, is indicated by the fact that tradition has given the name *Bahr Yusuf*, 'Joseph's Canal', to the great water-channel which fed the Fayûm reservoir.

Not far from the reservoir the Pharaoh caused an immense series of buildings to be erected over an area a thousand feet long and nearly as wide, these consisting of temples, houses, offices, storerooms, courts and so forth. The place was still standing in the time of Herodotus, who says that there were no less than

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

three thousand separate rooms and twelve courts. The whole place "excelled all other human works", he says, "for the passages through the buildings, and the intricacies of the paths across the courts excited in me infinite admiration, as I passed from courts into chambers, from chambers into colonnades, from colonnades into other houses, and again from these into farther courts. The roofing throughout was of stone like the walls; and every court was enclosed by colonnades."

Strabo says that the passages were so intricate that no stranger could find his way without a guide; and Pliny says that "some of the halls are so peculiarly constructed that the moment the doors are opened a dreadful sound like thunder reverberates within", and that "the greater part of the buildings has to be traversed in total darkness".

These buildings, which seem to have formed the seat of government for the whole country, were called by the Greeks the *Labyrinth*, in which word the king's name *Labari* will be recognized. Unfortunately they were entirely destroyed in Roman and Arabic times, being used as a quarry; and practically nothing now remains of this wonder of wonders.

Close to the Labyrinth the Pharaoh's pyramid was erected of brick and stone, the base-measurement being three hundred and fifty feet on each side; and the inner passages and chambers, all of which are of stone, show the care he took to prevent his body being disturbed by tomb-robbers in the days to come. The entrances was on the south side, and not, as usual, in the north face; but in case this mouth should be found the internal passages were so constructed as to outwit the robber. Some passages ended in a blank,

the entrances to the farther passages being through a sliding trap in the roof, or through one in the floor, or again through a concealed tunnel in the wall ; and even if the burial chamber were to be located the doorway to it would be found to be closed by an immense block of stone weighing some forty-five tons, dropped into position after the burial.

Nevertheless the ancient robbers succeeded in mining their way into the burial-chamber, where they must have found the king buried with his favourite little daughter who had died during his lifetime ; and so thorough was their ransacking of the place, that only a few fragments were left to be gathered together by the modern explorers.

The king also built himself a second pyramid in the desert not far south of the necropolis of Memphis ; and near this were the smaller pyramid-tombs of some of the royal ladies, wherein great finds of glorious jewellery have been made in modern times.

Widespread activity marked the whole reign, and there are some fragmentary references to a campaign in the Sudan which appears to have carried the Egyptian frontier back to the Third Cataract. The copper-mines of Sinai were worked with great energy ; and in this connection two inscriptions may be mentioned which reveal once more the consideration shown to the workmen in ancient Egypt. In one of these the officer in charge says : " I worked the mines, and my young men remained at their full number, nor did a single one of them die." And in the other another officer, who also declares that there were no casualties, adds the significant sentence : " I treated my men with great kindness, and I never shouted at the workmen."

Something of the king's character can be read in the faces of a wonderful series of portrait-heads of him which have come down to us ; for in these there is an increasing expression of weariness and melancholy as he grows older. The eyelids become heavier, the eyes more sunken in the head, and the lines under the eyes more marked, until as an old man his face appears haggard, careworn, and full of a profound sadness.

He reigned forty-nine years, and in the last year of his life he associated his successor upon the throne with him, this monarch being Maekherure Amenemhet or Amenemhet the Fourth.

The new reign was short, however, and at the king's death there was no male heir to the throne. A princess named Sobknofru was therefore accepted as Queen, being given the various names and titles of a Pharaoh. In 1898 B.C. she died after a reign of less than four years, and with her the great Twelfth Dynasty came to an end.

It had been a period of wonderful prosperity, and, apart from the wars against the negroes, one of comparatively peaceful development. The art of the period is excellent, and the sculptured portraits of Amenemhet the Third are more realistic than any previously accomplished, while the great human-headed sphinxes found at Tanis in the Delta were never surpassed in power and majesty. Literature advanced also and some of the stories of this period have a strong dramatic appeal.

In the account of the adventures of Sinuhe, for instance, the description of his return as an old man, and his greeting by the royal family, is genuinely moving ; and, indeed, the whole narrative is a fine example of the art of story-telling. There is drama,

again, in a famous romance of this age now known as the story of 'the Shipwrecked Sailor', in which we read of the adventures of a man marooned on an enchanted island where lived a melancholy old serpent of enormous size, with a human voice and a most benevolent nature.

This was a period of rapid development in religious beliefs and mythology. The worship of Osiris as the great god of the Dead took shape ; and at Abydos in Upper Egypt—practically the same place as the old Theni—mystery plays were enacted in his honour. At Thebes the worship of the local god Amen or Ammon developed, and by his identification with the old sun-god of On, the great Amen-Re (or Ammon-Ra) came into being as a divinity who was soon to become the 'King of the Gods'. Great numbers of temples were erected throughout the land, dedicated to the gods and goddesses of the different localities ; and the wealth and power of the various priesthoods increased on all sides.

Egypt had always been a rich country, partly because of the extraordinary fertility of the soil, and partly because of its natural resources—the gold-mines in the eastern desert and the copper-mines of Sinai, for example ; and during this particular age this wealth was fully exploited.

CHAPTER EIGHT

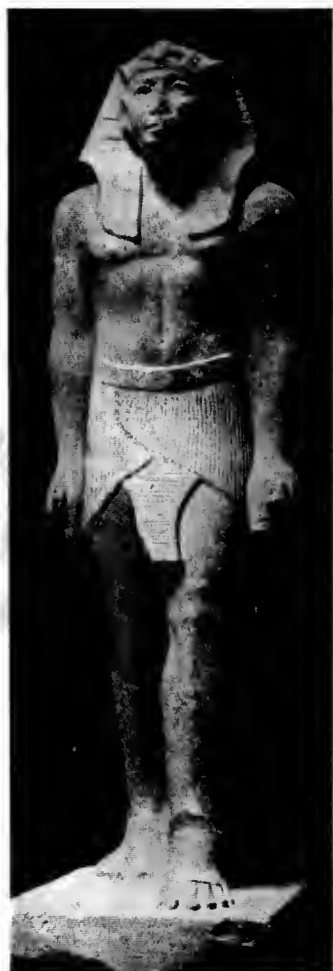
The Thirteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties

THE Thirteenth Dynasty opened with the brightest of prospects. Many people must have been relieved that the country was no longer ruled by a woman, and there was evidently plenty of support for the strong man of the time who was now proclaimed Pharaoh under the name Khetouire Ugef, although he does not appear to have been closely related to the royal family of the Twelfth Dynasty. The probability is that he belonged to the princely house of Thebes from which the previous line of kings had also sprung ; and there is some reason to suppose that he made Thebes once more the capital.

It will be remembered that Egypt's southern frontier had been pushed back to the Third Cataract again by Amenemhet the Third, and the new Pharaoh at once gave his attention to this area, where, indeed, it is possible that he was serving as governor when he was called to the throne. Unfortunately, he died three years later, and his successor, Sekhemkere, who also had a short reign, left the kingdom in such a condition of unrest that the next twelve Pharaohs appear to have reigned in as many years, and, in fact, may have all been reigning at the same time in different parts of Egypt, for Herodotus has a muddled story that there were twelve Pharaohs who divided up the country



A STATUE OF THE PHARAOH HOR-ANTU
ABRE. THIRTEENTH DYNASTY



STATUE OF A PHARAOH FOUND AT
ABYDOS. THIRTEENTH DYNASTY

THE THIRTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH DYNASTIES

between them in the days of the building of the Labyrinth, and it is quite possible that that vast structure was not completed until this time.

As a result of this disunion, Upper Egypt and the Delta became separated once more into two kingdoms, though perhaps the Lower Egyptian line was more or less a vassal of the Upper. The kings who reigned in the north are classed as the Fourteenth Dynasty, and, since absolutely nothing is known of them except some of their names, they need hardly enter into our story.

Meanwhile, in Upper Egypt, the next nine Pharaohs of the Thirteenth Dynasty reigned and passed away within a period of no more than twenty years, leaving us their names, and in some cases the lengths of their reigns, and also a certain number of inscriptions and inscribed monuments to tell of their brief activities. It is not necessary to mention more than two or three of the Thirteenth Dynasty monarchs by name, for their reigns were short and their influence upon history almost negligible. Of the Pharaoh Fuibre, whose tomb or cenotaph has been found not far from Memphis, there is a most beautiful statue carved in wood which shows that the artists of the period were still unaffected by the unstable conditions. Then there were two kings of the name of Sobkhotpe, and one called Mermeshoi who has left two excellent statues of himself.

After this, in about 1860 B.C., came a Pharaoh of the name of Neferhotpe, a man of great learning, who is stated in a contemporary inscription to have studied the old books in the libraries, and who has left various traces of his enlightened rule in Upper Egypt ; and it appears to have been in his reign that the eastern side of Lower Egypt was invaded by that famous horde

of Semitic tribesmen who are known as the *Hyksos* or 'Shepherds'.

These eastern invaders had been filtering into Egypt as settlers for some time. They were the same people who had over-run the eastern Delta at the close of the Eleventh Dynasty, two and a half centuries earlier, and who had been turned out by Amenemhet the First at the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty, the patriarch Abraham being probably amongst those deported. But now they were back again, and there was a great concentration of them at a place called Avaris, which is probably the modern Tell el-Yehudiyeh, between Bubastis, the modern Zagazig, and what is now the line of the Suez Canal.

They were of mixed race. It is quite probable that some of them were, as old Josephus declares, the actual ancestors of the later Jewish nation; some were Syrians; others were Bedouin Arabs; and most of them had lived for centuries on the southern edges of Palestine and near the eastern fringes of the Egyptian Delta. Many of their chieftains were men of the standing of Abraham and Jacob, that is to say, *sheikhs* or headmen of desert tribes, and owners of large herds of sheep and cattle, who had been tempted into Egypt by the pasturage it afforded.

They were swarthy, black-bearded men who had three definite advantages over the mild and clean-shaven Egyptians: they had learnt from Asia the use of wheeled chariots, whereas the Egyptians had no such vehicles and had never used wheels; these chariots were drawn by horses, whereas the Egyptians had hardly even seen a horse before this time, although they had plenty of donkeys; and their bronze weapons were better and more serviceable than those used in the

THE THIRTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH DYNASTIES

Nile Valley. They were by no means savages, and they may be compared in many ways to the Saracens who fought the Crusaders—dashing warriors, that is to say, well-armed and well-dressed, and having almost as high a code of honour and morals as their opponents.

Somewhere about the year 1857 B.C., when perhaps Neferhotpe of the Thirteenth Dynasty was paramount King of Upper Egypt and some unknown monarch of the Fourteenth Dynasty was vassal-king in Lower Egypt, these Semitic invaders proclaimed their most important chieftain as king in the eastern Delta, and the Egyptians of that neighbourhood made the best of a bad business by acknowledging him as a Pharaoh and giving him the usual Pharaonic names and titles. His personal name was Salati (the Salatis of Manetho), this apparently being rendered by the Egyptians as Sanati; and with him began the Hyksos royal line which is known as the Fifteenth Dynasty.

He was followed upon the throne of this small kingdom in the eastern Delta by Bebnun (Bnon), next by Merusrre Yapakhal (Apachnas), and then by Oeusrrre Apopi (Apophis), the last-named succeeding to the crown in about 1813 B.C.

Meanwhile six more Pharaohs of the Thirteenth Dynasty, including three of the name of Sobkhotpe, had ruled in Upper Egypt chiefly at Thebes, and now a seventh, Merneferre Ay, was upon the southern throne; while in the western Delta several more Pharaohs of the Fourteenth Dynasty had had their day, and now that throne was occupied by a monarch named Toutimaïos by Manetho, who may have been the Thetumre of the Turin Papyrus.

At this juncture King Apophi of the Hyksos Fifteenth

Dynasty invaded Egypt proper, established himself at Memphis, and made himself paramount ruler of the whole country, King Ay of the Thirteenth Dynasty in the south and King Thetumre of the Fourteenth Dynasty in the north becoming his vassals. Apophi has left records of his activities in various parts of the country, and a copy of an important treatise on mathematics dated in the thirty-third year of his reign has been found. He appears to have tried to behave himself as though he were a native Egyptian ; and when he died in 1777 B.C. he was succeeded by his son (?) Seusrenre Khyan (the Ionias of Manetho), who had evidently been brought up more or less as an Egyptian, and proved to be one of the great Pharaohs.

After reigning some thirty years this Khyan suppressed the native vassal-kings of Upper and Lower Egypt who form the tail-end of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties ; and thus the Fifteenth Dynasty, to which he belonged, became the sole royal line in Egypt, and the Egyptians were obliged to settle down to be ruled by a foreigner. Khyan, however, as has just been said, had adopted Egyptian ways, followed the Egyptian custom of shaving his face, and called himself by all the old royal titles of Egypt, to which, however, he added the designation 'Prince of the Desert' ; but the number of black-bearded, hook-nosed foreigners about the court were sufficient reminders of his nationality, and there must have been regiments of bearded and fierce-looking soldiers stationed in some of the cities. This was the first time in all the sixteen hundred years of Egypt's history since the days of the First Dynasty that the country had been under a foreign yoke ; but it is clear that Egyptian institutions were not interfered with, and

that the life of the people remained more or less unchanged.

Khyan, of course, had none of the insularity of the Egyptians who had always regarded foreign nations as being hardly human ; and it appears that he maintained friendly relations with other kingdoms and encouraged commerce with them. A granite lion bearing his name has been discovered in far-off Bagdad, and the lid of an alabaster vase, likewise inscribed with his name, has been found at Knossos in Crete. These objects, and also part of a statue of him unearthed at Bubastis in the Delta, show that Egyptian arts and crafts had been maintained at a fairly high level throughout the hundred and twenty years or so since the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty.

Khyan is an important figure for Biblical students. There is a persistent Hebrew tradition that at the time of the Exodus the Israelites had been resident in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years ; and in due course we shall see that the probable date of the Exodus is 1346 B.C., which, if these figures are correct, would mean that the Israelites made their first extensive settlement in Egypt at the beginning of Khyan's reign, the previous settlement in the time of Joseph and Jacob having been confined to a few families, and having been but a temporary sojourn at that. Nothing could be more likely than a Hebrew migration into the Delta on a large scale at this time, since Khyan himself was of Semitic stock, closely kin to the early Hebrew tribes.

It was in the eleventh year of this reign, 1767 B.C., that an adjustment of the calendar was made. At that time the Egyptian calendar instituted at the beginning of the First Dynasty had made one complete cycle of the real year, and had now fallen back again exactly

a month behind the seasons ; and Khyan therefore gave orders that an extra month should be added, and that the second month of the year should become the first. The Egyptians seem to have felt that this tampering with the calendar was sacrilegious, and when on one of the calendar festivals which had to be postponed for a month there was a thunderstorm and on another it rained, a certain scribe nervously made a note of the fact, as though to say that the gods were angry, and this note has chanced to be preserved.

Khyan's astronomers, however, did not realize that the cause of the calendar's falling back was the absence of a leap-year's day ; and thus the adjustment did not do more than bring the months temporarily back into their proper seasonal place, and soon they were falling back again as before.

Upon Khyan's death in 1727 B.C., after a reign of fifty years, his throne passed to another Semitic Pharaoh, Maeibre Ashshi, who may have been his son ; but in the first year of his reign the southern Egyptians declared their independence and crowned one of their own princes as Pharaoh under the name Dedhotpere Dudumose, this monarch being the first of the Seventeenth Dynasty. But while the succeeding kings of this native Egyptian dynasty continued to rule in the south, in the north the death of Ashshi in 1678 B.C. brought his line to a close, and he was succeeded by a sequence of Hyksos kings known as the Sixteenth Dynasty.

These foreign kings of the Sixteenth Dynasty were not nearly so powerful as were their predecessors of the Fifteenth Dynasty, and though they managed to hold the northern part of Upper Egypt and also the Delta, the Egyptian kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty steadily increased their power in the south and appear

to have made Thebes their capital. Another Pharaoh called Dudumose, three named Sobkemsuf, and four of the name of Intefoe, have left considerable records of their activities in the south, and traces of some of their small brick pyramids have been found in the necropolis of Thebes ; but neither they nor their Hyksos contemporaries in the north need here detain us, and we may pass on to the time when the Hyksos Pharaoh Oeqenenre Apopi of the Sixteenth Dynasty (1596-1576 B.C.) was reigning at Memphis over the north, and the Egyptian Pharaoh Seqenenre Tauoe of the Seventeenth Dynasty (1600-1585 B.C.) was reigning at Thebes over the south.

Both these kings were men of energy and courage, and at length the Hyksos monarch decided to go to war with his Egyptian contemporary and if possible to suppress him. The story is told in an ancient papyrus which reads as follows :

“ It happened that the land of Egypt was possessed by the Filthy-ones ”—an impolite reference to the Hyksos foreigners—“ and in those days there was no one lord and king of the whole country. At that time there was a king Seqenenre, but he was sovereign only of the south country, and the Filthy-ones were in the northern cities, and Apopi was their monarch, and the whole country brought its produce to him with all the good things of the land of Egypt. . . .

“ Now King Apopi was thinking out the wording of a message to send to King Seqenenre, the ruler of the south country, in order to pick a quarrel with him ; and after many days King Apopi called to him his chiefs, his captains, and his high officials ; but they did not know what to say to King Seqenenre. King Apopi therefore sent for his wise men and scribes, and

these said to him : ‘ O Lord, our Master, let this have your approval ’ ; and they gave King Apopi the wording which he desired. A messenger, they said, should be sent to the southern ruler, and should say to him : ‘ King Apopi sends to ask you to refrain from hunting the hippopotami which are in the lakes and waterways of the country, so that they may let me sleep undisturbed, for day and night the noise of their complaint is in my ear. ’ ”

This message was devised to put the southern Pharaoh in a quandary, for the Hyksos kings had always paid great respect to the god Set, one of the aboriginal gods of Egypt, who was identified by them with their own deity Sutekh, and the hippopotamus was an animal sacred to that god ; but the Egyptians of the south had long since come to regard Set with disfavour, and they had not the slightest compunction about hunting the hippopotamus. Apopi was therefore ordering the southern Egyptians to conform to a religious custom to which they were sure to object.

When this message was delivered “ the southern king was troubled, for he knew not how to answer. At length King Seqenenre said to the messenger : ‘ This matter on which your master has sent you. . . . ’ ” (Here there is an unfortunate break in the papyrus.) “ Then the messenger of King Apopi took his departure and returned to the place where his master was ; but the ruler of the south country called to him his great chiefs, and he told them all these matters, and they were silent with one accord and were much troubled, for they did not know how to reply. ”

The rest of the story is lost, and all we know is that war was declared and the Egyptian Pharaoh Seqenenre was killed. His mummy presents a terrible sight, for

his head is covered with wounds. A battle-axe has crashed through the upper part of his forehead, leaving a hole two inches long and the hair matted with blood around it ; another blow from an axe has cut into the brain above the right eye ; a sword-thrust has pierced through his left cheek ; a spear has been driven into the left side of the head above the ear ; and a blunt instrument such as a club has smashed the right eye and its socket and broken the bridge of the nose. The face is agonized ; the clenched teeth have bitten through the tongue ; and the hands are convulsed and clawing.

The fact that the body had not been properly mummified, and that no attempt had been made to straighten the limbs or smooth out the features of the face, indicates that the corpse was recovered with difficulty and that a hasty burial was necessitated by the flight of the court southwards. The body shows the king to have been about thirty-five years of age at his death. He was a man of Upper Egyptian race, about five feet eight inches in height, broad-shouldered, and having a large, clever-looking head, covered by a thick crop of dark, curly hair.

Sequenre left a young son of six years of age, named Ahmose, who ultimately became Pharaoh ; but the throne passed to Kemose, who was probably the brother of the slain monarch, and at length this new king recovered most of his lost ground, and was able to fix his northern frontier a few miles north of Assiout. A fragmentary copy of an inscription dated in the third year of his reign has come down to us, and reads :

“ His Majesty said : ‘ To what purpose is my power, when there is one ruler in the north and another in

the Sudan? I sit here linked with an Asiatic on one side and a negro on the other, while every man holds his own slice of this Egypt. To King Apopi who shares this land with me I do not concede the river even as far south as Memphis, yet he holds Eshmunên"—fifty miles north of Assiout—"and no man remains there but is wearied with serving the Asiatics. I will grapple with him, and rip him open, for my desire is to deliver Egypt and to strike down these Asiatics.'

"And the nobles of the council said: 'Indeed, the Asiatics have advanced as far as Kusîyeh'—thirty miles north of Assiout—"and they have all put their tongues out at us. However, we can easily hold our own part of Egypt. Elephantine (at the First Cataract) is strong, and the midland is with us as far as Kusîyeh. . . .' But these words were painful to the heart of his Majesty, and he said: 'No, I am going to fight these Asiatics. Success will come.'"

There is here a gap in the inscription, and when the thread of it can be taken up the king is describing what happened. "I then sailed down-stream victoriously to drive back the Asiatics by the command of Amen. The plans of my army were successful, for every soldier was before me like a flame of fire, and the troops of the Mazoi"—the negro warriors trained by the Egyptians—"advanced beyond our lines to search out the Asiatics and to destroy their positions. East and west we were victorious, the army rejoicing at one event after another."

There was a certain Egyptian prince named Toti who was fighting on the side of the Hyksos, and in regard to him the king writes: "'Then I despatched a strong force of Mazoi, while I spent the day endeavouring to surround Toti, the son of Piopi, in the district

of Nofrusi (north of Eshmunên) ; for I was not going to allow him to escape. I defeated the Asiatics, and on that occasion I spent the night on board my ship, my heart rejoicing, and when the day dawned I pounced on him like a hawk. I overthrew him at the moment when he was cleaning his teeth. I battered down his walls ; I slaughtered his people ; and I forced his wife to plunge down the bank of the river. My soldiers were like wolves with their prey. . . .’ ”

Here the inscription breaks off, but enough has been left to show that Kemose must have driven the enemy northwards into the Delta. In the year 1576 B.C., however, Kemose died, and was buried in his brick pyramid in the Theban necropolis ; and his nephew Ahmose, son of the late Seqenenre, succeeded to the throne. Ahmose was now just about sixteen years of age—the age, that is to say, at which an Egyptian attained his majority ; and the army hailed him as its leader in the prosecution of the war against Apopi.

Ahmose, as we shall see in the next chapter, completed the conquest of the Hyksos and became Pharaoh of all Egypt : and for this reason Manetho begins a new dynasty with him.

CHAPTER NINE

The First Four Kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty : Ahmose, Amenhotpe the First, Thutmose the First, and Thutmose the Second

NEBPEHTIRE AHMOSE, first Pharaoh of the great Eighteenth Dynasty, whose name, which Manetho read as Amosis, means 'Moon-child', came to the throne, as has been said, in 1576 B.C., when he was about sixteen years of age. He was the son of the unfortunate Seqenenre and of his sister-wife Ahhotpe; and at about the time of his accession he married his elder sister who, like him, was called Ahmose, to which she now added the name Nofretiri (Nefertari), meaning 'Beautiful Companion'.

The victories of Kemose had inspired all Egypt with the passionate desire to make an end of the Hyksos foreigners; and all eyes were turned to the young Ahmose in the hope that he would prove to be the great liberator. The army was ready to follow him, and the troops were heartened by their confidence in the fighting-strength of the Mazoi, or negro levies, who, under their Egyptian officers, had become one of the most formidable forces in the world. Unfortunately the detailed records of the ensuing war are lost, with the exception of those mentioned in the biographical inscription of a certain officer also named

Ahmose ; but something of the story can be learnt from this source.

“ I spent my youth ”, writes this officer, “ in the city of Nekheb ”—opposite the old Hawk-capital of Nekhen—“ my father having been an officer of the late King Seqenenre, named Bebe. When he died, I served in his place as captain of the battleship *Bull*, in the time of King Ahmose, at which period I was young and unmarried ; but later, after I had set up a household, I was transferred to the northern fleet, and, so that I might be in the fighting, I followed the king on my own two feet when he went forth to battle in his chariot.” (Chariots and horses had now been adopted by the Egyptians from their eastern enemies.)

“ Now the king was besieging the city of Avaris ”—the stronghold in the eastern Delta which had always been the military headquarters of the Hyksos, and was now their last refuge—“ and I fought on foot before his Majesty, in consequence of which I was appointed to the battleship *Crowned-in-Memphis*. Then the king fought on the waters of the canal at Avaris, and I fought in single combat with one of the enemy, whose severed hand I brought away as a trophy”—that being the Egyptian method of counting the enemy dead after a fight. “ This was reported to the king’s recorder ; and the king presented me with gold for my gallantry. Then again there was fighting in this place, and again I fought in single combat there, and brought away my opponent’s hand, for which the king presented me with gold on this second occasion.”

Manetho refers to the war in general terms, and after saying that the defeated enemy were shut up in Avaris, he tells us that they finally surrendered on terms and were allowed to march out of Egypt back to the lands

on the fringe of Syria whence they had come. They concentrated in the city of Sharuhen in southern Judah, but as they were still a menace to Egypt, the Pharaoh attacked them there and captured Sharuhen after a siege of three years.

Biblical students will find it interesting to notice that Hebrew tradition declares the 'Oppression' of the Israelites in Egypt to have lasted two hundred and forty years, and as the Exodus appears to have taken place in 1346 B.C., this means that the Israelites considered their hard usage to have dated from the outbreak of the war between the Egyptians and the Hyksos in 1586 B.C.—the war, that is to say, which Ahmose had now brought to a successful conclusion.

"Now after his Majesty had defeated the Asiatics," the same officer continues, "he went up the Nile to Khenthennofer"—above the Second Cataract—"to destroy the Nubian desert-tribes; and he made a great slaughter amongst them. Then his Majesty sailed down-stream, his heart happy by reason of the mightiness of his victory, for he had seized southerners and northerners alike."

Many years later, probably in about the twentieth year of the reign, the Pharaoh once more marched across the desert into Syria, apparently to give the *coup de grâce* to the remnants of the Hyksos hordes; but nothing is known of the affair except that he brought back a number of prisoners whom he put to work in the limestone quarries opposite Memphis. It is said that "the fear of him was in all the lands of the Syrians", and that such Semitics as had to approach him did so "with frightened steps, and stood huddled together in his audience-hall".

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

During the early part of the reign the royal grandmother, Totisheri, mother of Seqenenre, had still been alive ; and when she died she was buried in a tomb at Thebes, from which her body was removed to a place of greater safety some centuries later, whence in modern times it was taken to the Cairo Museum. The mummy is that of a little old lady, with prominent upper teeth, and with white hair which had become so scanty that it was eked out by false plaits.

A cenotaph had also been constructed for her just to the south of the ancient cemetery of the kings at Theni (Abydos), and late in the reign the king decided to have this enlarged by the addition of a pyramid and a shrine. The remains of these have been found and also an inscribed tablet, which records the work and gives us something of a picture of the time—for which reason it may here be quoted :

“ Now it happened that his Majesty King Ahmose was sitting in the audience-hall of the palace, and with him was her Majesty Queen Ahmose Nofretiri ; and the king was speaking to her about the welfare of those yonder (i.e. the dead), and about the making of libations and the offering of sacrifices to them upon the altars. . . . Then his sister said to him : ‘ Why have these things been recalled ?—why have these words been spoken ?—what is in your mind ? ’ And the king said to her : ‘ I have been thinking of our grandmother, Queen Totisheri. Although her tomb and her cenotaph are at Thebes and Abydos, yet I have said this to you because I have wished to make for her also a pyramid and a shrine at Abydos as a memorial-presentation. Its sacred lake shall be dug, trees shall be planted around it, and its offerings shall be instituted. It shall be provided with attendants,

endowed with lands, and furnished with cattle ; and there shall be mortuary-priests and ritual-priests, every man knowing his duties.' No sooner had his Majesty said the word than these buildings were constructed apace, his Majesty doing this because he had loved her beyond anything. Then his Majesty came and stretched out his arm and bent his hand in salutation to her, and pronounced for her the royal funeral-prayer, and made sacrifice to the gods."

The matriarchal character of the royal house is very pronounced at this time, and it would seem that in these days when the Egyptians were asserting their old customs in order to counteract the influences left behind by the Hyksos, they were making a particular point of re-establishing the status of women and especially of the mother as the legal head of the family. Thus we find both Totisheri and her daughter Ahhotpe, mother of Ahmose, receiving special attentions ; while great deference was paid to Ahmose-Nofretiri, the reigning queen, who in after years was venerated as the divine ancestress and matriarch of the dynasty.

The tomb of King Ahmose has not been identified, but his body has been found, and shows that he was about forty at the time of his death in 1551 B.C., after he had reigned some twenty-five years. He was a strongly-built, broad-shouldered man of medium height, having a thick crop of curly brown hair, and rather prominent upper teeth. He was succeeded by his and his sister's son, Thoserkere Amenhotpe, or Amenhotpe the First, who was probably about twenty years of age at his accession. (The second part of this name, *hotpe*, which is sometimes read by Egyptologists as *hotep* or *hetep*, was in later times slurred into 'o'pe. Thus Manetho reads the name as Amenophis, the *p*

having softened into *ph* in his day, and the usual termination in *s* having been added.)

The new Pharaoh married his sister, another Ahhotpe ; and during the reign both their mother Ahmose-Nofretiri and their grandmother Ahhotpe lived on in high honour. There is an inscription, dating from the tenth year of the reign, which tells of a gift made by the old Queen Ahhotpe, who was then some seventy-five years of age, to her steward, Prince Keres ; and its human interest entitles it to be quoted.

“The command of the Queen-Mother Ahhotpe to the Prince Keres,” it begins. “The Queen-Mother commands that there shall be made for you a tomb at Abydos, in recognition of all your services and all your kindness. . . . This the Queen-Mother does for you as for one whom she has loved. For you are the real confidant of the Queen, to whom her secrets are told, experienced in the habits of the Queen, transacting her affairs at the palace, finding the solutions of difficulties, making disagreeable matters pleasant, one on whose opinion the Queen depends, seeking out the truth, understanding the affairs of the heart, . . . excellent in speaking, reserved in mind, administering the palace with shut mouth in regard to what he hears, not allowing himself more leisure by night than by day . . . a man of truth, genuinely honest, quick in deciding matters, protecting the weak, defending him who is without a defender, sending away two differing men reconciled by what he has said, and as just as a pair of scales. . . .”

With the exception of two or three minor campaigns, directed against the negroes of the Sudan and the tribesmen of the western desert, the reign appears to have passed in profound peace ; and the Pharaoh,

who was a man of great piety, was able to give much attention to the erection of temples and to the restoration of those which had fallen into decay during the three troubled centuries since the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty.

In particular he built a splendid temple for the service of his spirit after his death, this being situated at the edge of the desert at the south end of the Theban necropolis. It now forms part of the groups known in general as the Temple of Medinet Habu, but at that time it stood alone, surrounded by a garden of great beauty.

A new kind of tomb was devised for this king. In the unsettled times through which the country had passed a great deal of robbery amongst the tombs had taken place ; and, rather than give up the old habit of burying jewellery and valuables with the royal dead, the king decided to conceal his burial-place with greater care, and to abandon the custom of building a pyramid or other conspicuous monument.

He therefore adopted the novel idea of having his body hidden away on the top of the western cliffs of Thebes, and for this purpose he chose a site for his tomb in a shallow ravine amongst the rocks and loose gravel on the summit. The entrance was a pit in which was a steep flight of steps descending to a rough tunnel—a mere rabbit-hole, so to speak—which led first to a small chamber and thence to a large sepulchral hall, like a subterranean cellar, hewn out of the rock. After his burial the entrance was to be filled up with stones, and the surface made to look like the untouched desert.

Some centuries later the king's body was removed from the tomb and hidden elsewhere, and it is now

in the Cairo Museum ; but the mummy has never been unwrapped. The tomb was entirely robbed in ancient times, and now lies open and empty. Another tomb, at the northern end of the Theban necropolis, has been thought to be his ; but this is more probably the burial-place of the Queen-Mother Ahmose-Nofretiri, who died during the latter part of the reign.

When King Amenhotpe died in 1526 B.C., leaving no son, the throne passed to his half-brother, Oekheperkere Thutmose, or Thutmose the First, a man of over forty-five years of age who was the son of King Ahmose by a secondary wife, and who married his half-sister Ahmose-Hent-Temehu, who was the daughter of King Ahmose by yet another wife. (The name Thutmose, the Tuthmosis of Manetho, means ' Child of Thoth ', the god of wisdom, and as the *mose* is sometimes read *mes*, the name used often to be rendered as Thothmes.)

The new Pharaoh was, as his mummy shows, a short, stocky man, not much more than five feet in height, with a good forehead, a delicately shaped nose, and the somewhat projecting upper teeth characteristic of the family. By the time of his death he had become very wrinkled and completely bald, and since he has an expression of shrewdness and cunning his general appearance is that of a crafty old priest ; yet, actually, his chief characteristics appear to have been his energy and fighting spirit, and in the keen pursuit of military glory he changed the whole course of Egyptian history.

Previous to the Fifteenth Dynasty Egypt had maintained a peculiarly isolated position in the world ; and, hemmed in by the sea and the deserts, the prosperous and self-contained Valley of the Nile had bred a race which neither knew nor cared what was happening outside its borders, and which confined its external

warfare to campaigns against the negroes of the Sudan, the Libyan tribesmen of the western desert, and the Bedouin or other Semitic peoples of the eastern desert, the peninsula of Sinai, and the Syrian borderlands.

Then had come the Hyksos invasion and occupation of Egypt, and the Egyptians had learnt to their cost of the might and civilized standing of the Semitic races living in Syria. King Ahmose had penetrated into that country in pursuit of the ousted Hyksos ; and now, after the pacific reign of Amenhotpe the First, the new Pharaoh was eager to lead his well-trained army of Egyptian and negro troops into that 'land of milk and honey' which was later to attract the wandering Israelite hordes.

This desire to move eastwards, partly in retaliation for the invasion of their own country by the easterners, brought the Pharaohs out of their seclusion and introduced them into the affairs of the outside world ; and henceforth Egypt was one of the great military powers of the ancient East, at first gloriously victorious, but in the end overwhelmed and ruined. The Eighteenth Dynasty marks the height of Egyptian expansion : it is the great age of what is called the Egyptian Empire ; and the conquests of the Pharaoh with whom we are now concerned, Thutmose the First, proved to be at once the genesis of Egypt's most splendid phase and the cause of her ultimate downfall.

Thutmose began his military career by a campaign against the negroes, as a result of which he fixed his southern frontier at Tombos, just above the Third Cataract. In the inscription written upon the boundary-stone at this place the Pharaoh is eulogized in the following terms :

"He has deposed the chief of the Nubians, and the

negro is helplessly in his grip. He has joined up his frontiers on both sides of the Nile, and there is not a man remaining amongst the people of the crimped hair who will come to attack him, for there is not a single survivor amongst those who did so before. The Nubian Bedouins have fallen by the sword, and are scattered over their territory, so that their putrefying bodies have choked their valleys, and at the mouths of their ravines they are like a great flood ; for their carcasses have been too much for the vultures to devour or carry away as their prey to another place. None amongst the hostile tribes will face this frontier-fortress, for, like a young panther amongst a herd in flight, the fame of his Majesty has dazzled them. He has brought the corners of the earth under his dominion, and he patrols its two ends, his mighty sword in hand, looking for a fight, but finding no one who will face him."

There are no proper records of the expedition into Syria which followed this Sudan campaign, and only two or three scattered references to it have survived ; but it is clear that the Egyptian army marched from the eastern Delta across the desert to what is now southern Palestine, thence northwards along the coast and over the Lebanon to Aleppo, and at length reached the Euphrates in the neighbourhood of the old Carchemish, that is to say, at about the modern frontier between Syria and Kurdistan—a point nearly six hundred miles, as the crow flies, from the edge of the Egyptian Delta. There, on the bank of the Euphrates, the Pharaoh set up his boundary-tablet ; and for centuries to come Egypt laid claim to the whole of Syria between that river and the Mediterranean.

It had all been very easy, for the Syrian peoples were

disunited and had been so little able to make any organized resistance to the well-drilled Egyptian army that the invaders had done little more than chase strange-looking foreigners over stranger landscapes, sacking cities the like of which they had never seen before, cutting down orchards of unknown fruit-trees, and plundering unheard-of harvests. Troops and officials were left to guard and administer these possessions ; and henceforth Egypt was a military empire, very pleased with itself, rather arrogant, and immensely confident of its power to dominate this new world.

For the remainder of the king's short reign of thirteen years he devoted himself to the creation of an Egypt worthy of its imperial destiny. Immense building-operations were undertaken, and in particular the temple of Amen-Re at Karnak, just outside Thebes, was enlarged and beautified. Huge pylons and gateways were constructed of limestone procured from those quarries, near the modern Cairo, which had supplied the stone for the ancient pyramids ; and monstrous monoliths of pink granite, quarried at the First Cataract, were fashioned into obelisks and erected in front of these pylons, their caps being of burnished copper.

Thus the king was able to say of himself : " I have beautified the sanctuaries of the gods, I have safeguarded their temples, I have restored that which was in ruins, I have increased that which was done before. I have informed the priests of their duties and have directed the ignorant in that which they did not know. I have surpassed the work of other kings who were before me, and the gods are joyful in my time and their temples are in festivity. I have set the boundaries of Egypt as far as the circuit of the sun. I have made courageous those who were afraid, for I have banished

the menace from them, and have made Egypt the superior of every land."

During the early part of this reign the old Queen Ahhotpe, mother of King Ahmose, died at an age which must have been over ninety years ; and the jewellery and regalia found in her huge coffin are now one of the sights of the Cairo Museum. Amongst these things are beautiful bracelets, a superb diadem, great necklaces of gold pendants, and the magnificent battle-axe and dagger of her famous son, Ahmose.

The glory of the king's career was clouded by the death of two of his sons, Amenmose and Uthmose ; and after this he seems to have devoted himself to his daughter who bore the good old Twelfth-Dynasty name of Hetshepsut, and to have ignored his remaining son, Thutmose.

The Pharaoh chose for the site of his tomb a place, a few yards westwards from that of Amenhotpe the First, where the hollow at the summit of the cliffs drops down into the southern corner of the great valley which is now the famous Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, but which was at that time a remote and desolate ravine shut in by the barrier-wall of these cliffs. Here in the cul-de-sac below his predecessor's sepulchre, Thutmose caused his own burial-place to be excavated at the foot of a precipice.

A rough tunnel, only high enough to admit a man standing upright, led to a flight of steps which descended to a square room hewn out of the rock, and thence a second flight led to the burial-hall, the walls of which were smoothed over with plaster. In this hall was the sarcophagus of quartzite-sandstone.

The tomb was made under the direction of a great architect named Ineni, who says in his biographical

inscription : " I arranged for the hewing of the rock-tomb for his Majesty, alone, no one seeing, no one hearing." Thus we are able to realize that when the Pharaoh died, in 1513 B.C., his burial must also have been conducted in the greatest possible secrecy, everybody being sworn to silence as to the location of the sepulchre ; and the entrance was concealed by stones and boulders. The mortuary services for the king's spirit were conducted in the temple erected by his predecessor, that building having been enlarged and re-decorated.

Immediately upon the old king's death his surviving son was proclaimed Pharaoh under the name Oekheperenre Thutmose, or Thutmose the Second as he is now called ; but his mother had been only a secondary wife of the late monarch, whereas the mother of the princess Hetshepsut had been the chief queen, Ahmose-Hent-Temehu, daughter of King Ahmose and half-sister of her husband. This Hetshepsut, who was now about fifteen years of age, always declared that her father had intended her to reign as sovereign-queen ; but to her great annoyance she was now obliged to marry her half-brother, Thutmose the Second, and to take the position merely of Queen-Consort.

He was an elegant young man of about twenty-one, taller than his warlike little father, but weaker in character and somewhat effeminate in nature ; and it is clear that from the first there was no love lost between him and his strong-minded wife and half-sister. Nevertheless, a year or two later they had a child, a girl named Nofrure ; after which, however, they seem to have become entirely estranged for several years.

The reign began with the rapid suppression of a

negro rebellion up at the Third Cataract. The king did not lead the punitive expedition, and, indeed, the rising had been crushed by the troops on the spot before the army arrived ; but he went up to the First Cataract and there received the prisoners when they were brought down from the south. Apart from this short campaign, and another against the Bedouin tribes in the eastern desert, the following years were peaceful.

The king, however, was gradually being pushed into the background by the energetic group of nobles who supported Hetshepsut's persistent claim that she and not Thutmose was the sovereign chosen by their father to succeed him ; and between the fifteenth and seventeenth years of the reign Hetshepsut very nearly succeeded in bringing off a *coup d'état* by which she would have been declared sole sovereign and Thutmose would have been practically deposed.

Her scheme was to make the seventeenth year of the reign a great jubilee-year, for in Egypt a Jubilee marked the thirtieth year after a reigning sovereign had been proclaimed heir to the throne ; and Hetshepsut wished to make manifest the fact that from her very birth she had been the chosen successor of her father. The seventeenth year of the reign would be the thirtieth year of her life, and thus by celebrating her Jubilee she would prove to the world that she, and not her partner on the throne, was the rightful sovereign.

In preparation for these celebrations she caused two great obelisks to be quarried at the First Cataract, and these she proposed to set up at Karnak. The plan failed to be carried through, however ; the idea of a jubilee had to be abandoned ; and the two unfinished obelisks were left for the time being lying on the ground

at Karnak. Instead, there was a reconciliation between the husband and wife, as a result of which it was hoped that a son might be born who would be the heir and would unite the two factions. The child, however, proved to be a girl, who was named Hetshepsut-Merytre ; and thereafter the breach widened.

Thutmose, meanwhile, was showing much affection for a son of his by a secondary wife, a lady not of royal birth ; and at the time of the birth of the princess Hetshepsut-Merytre this youth, who was also named Thutmose, was about sixteen years of age, and was serving as a priest in the temple of Amen-Re at Karnak. The faction at court which supported the king and opposed the claims of the queen therefore decided to have this young man proclaimed as heir to the throne, and in this they were aided by the priests of Amen-Re who arranged the following dramatic stroke.

At a certain religious festival at which the king was officiating, the processional statue of the god, which was being carried on the shoulders of the priests, suddenly appeared to get out of hand, and those who were carrying it staggered about and seemed to be forced to move in an unexpected direction, as though directed by the god himself. It seemed that Amen-Re was searching for somebody, and at last the priests came to a standstill in front of the young prince Thutmose, whereupon the statue was tilted forward as though bowing to the youth or pointing him out.

The prince at once threw himself upon the ground, and did obeisance to the god, and presently, rising to his feet, allowed himself to be guided to his father, the king, who pretended to show the utmost astonishment. The High Priest then announced that the god had evidently chosen the young man to be heir to the

throne ; and at this the entire company hailed him as their future Pharaoh.

Queen Hetshepsut must have been infuriated when she heard what had happened ; and the nobles who supported her must have realized that their only hope lay in the immediate death of the king and the proclamation of the queen as sole sovereign before the young prince Thutmose could consolidate his new position as heir to the throne. At this juncture (1493 B.C.) the king died, at the age of about forty ; and it seems pretty obvious that he was murdered.

Hetshepsut's party, however, was not strong enough to proclaim her as sole sovereign ; and the young prince Thutmose ascended the throne under the name Menkheperre Thutmose, or Thutmose the Third, Queen Hetshepsut being given a sort of regency, since the new Pharaoh was so young, but still being called Queen-Consort, and no more. The actual position is best described in the biographical inscription of the above-mentioned architect Ineni, who says : " He (Thutmose the Third) became ruler upon the throne of his father (Thutmose the Second) ; but the Queen-Consort Hetshepsut carried on the government of Egypt because of her abilities."

The tomb of Thutmose the Second had been made for him close to that of his father, Thutmose the First, at the bottom of the cliffs in the corner of the afterwards-celebrated Valley of the Kings ; and here he was secretly buried, although the work upon the sepulchre had not been completed at the time of his sudden death. His mummy shows him to have been a gentle, weak-looking man, whose wavy brown hair was artificially curled and whose finger-nails were carefully manicured.

Meanwhile Queen Hetshepsut had caused a tomb to be prepared for herself in a distant desert valley ; for she knew how powerful were her enemies, and she wished, in case of her death, to be buried where none might desecrate her sepulchre. This tomb is unique. It is hewn out of the rock high up in the precipitous face of a dizzy cliff, the mouth being over two hundred feet above the bed of the lonely valley below, and about a hundred and forty feet down from the top. A long tunnel led down to the burial-hall, and here a fine stone sarcophagus had been lowered from the cliff-top and hauled into position. As will be seen in the next chapter this tomb was never used.



CHAPTER TEN

Hetshepsut and Thutmose the Third of the Eighteenth Dynasty

THE new Pharaoh, the young Thutmose the Third, found himself from the first a personage of quite secondary importance, the power being in the hands of the Queen-Consort Hetshepsut who was both his stepmother and his aunt. It would have been correct for him to have married his half-sister Nofrure, the daughter of Hetshepsut and Thutmose the Second, who was now some nineteen years of age ; but this the queen would not allow, for, according to the Egyptian matriarchal system, in which the eldest daughter was the legal heiress, such a marriage would have made absolute the new Pharaoh's right to the throne, and Hetshepsut would have been relegated to the background as merely the late king's widow.

It may be mentioned in passing that Hetshepsut's mother, Ahmose-Hent-Temehu, daughter of King Ahmose and wife of Thutmose the First, was still alive, and may have had some influence at court. She was a handsome woman now in her sixties, and her hair was dyed a brilliant red and was interplaited with false strands of black, thus providing a startling but rather ornamental combination of the two colours. Her mummy, however, shows that she must have been driven nearly mad with toothache, for there are traces

of abscesses at the roots of the teeth and there is a good deal of decay as well. That she had some influence over her daughter may perhaps be inferred from the fact that the great change in the status of Hetshepsut which is about to be recorded took place almost immediately after the Queen-Mother's death.

For the last few years Thutmose had managed to assert himself to the extent of being named in all official inscriptions together with Hetshepsut ; but suddenly in the first days of the ninth year of the reign, 1485 B.C., the nobles surrounding the queen obtained the upper hand and proclaimed her as an actual Pharaoh under the name Maetkere Hetshepsut, and henceforth she was joint-sovereign with her nephew-stepson Thutmose, who, however, was no more than a nominal partner, crushed and insulted by Hetshepsut and her supporters.

Previous to this she had been but Queen-Consort, but now, like Thutmose, she was Hawk-sovereign, Reed- and Hornet-sovereign, and sovereign of the Vulture and the Cobra. She was at this time forty-five years of age, and Thutmose was about twenty-six ; and since Thutmose ultimately proved to be the greatest and most energetic Pharaoh in all Egypt's history, yet for the next thirteen years—the best years of his life—was in almost complete extinction, his tragic position will be realized.

Hetshepsut now gave the widest publicity to the story that her father, Thutmose the First, had officially chosen her, and not Thutmose the Second, to succeed him. "I have appointed her to be my successor upon my throne," she declared that he had said to the court. "She it is, assuredly, who shall sit upon my glorious throne ; she shall order all matters for the

people in every department of the state ; and she it is who shall lead you."

As a Pharaoh she now caused herself to be represented in male dress, but whether or not she *did* actually wear men's clothes is a question which cannot be answered. Certainly she insisted upon being called ' King ' and not ' Queen ' ; and the words, ' he ' and ' him ' were used instead of ' she ' and ' her '. Yet it cannot be said definitely that she was one of those abnormally masculine women with whom we meet from time to time in history ; and for all we know she may have been pushed into her present anomalous position as a make-believe king by the group of nobles around her whose fortunes depended upon the maintenance of her authority.

The leader of this group, and the great power behind the throne, was a personage named Senmut, who is described as being " the greatest of the great of the whole land, the superior of the superiors, the chief of the chiefs of all departments ". He was " one who heard that which was heard alone in the Privy Council, who was the real favourite of the sovereign, who entered the palace in love and came forth in favour, making glad the heart of his sovereign every day." It was he who really ruled the country and maintained the authority of Hetshepsut ; and he must have been the man most hated by the unfortunate Thutmose whose every attempt to assert himself was thwarted by Senmut.

It will be remembered that while Thutmose the Second was still alive, Hetshepsut had hoped to celebrate her Jubilee, and had caused two jubilee-obelisks to be quarried and brought down to Karnak. On the abandonment of these celebrations the obelisks

had been left unfinished and uninscribed ; but now that she was a Pharaoh she gave orders that they should at last be erected, and she caused an inscription to be written upon one of them, declaring with all possible emphasis that they had been made long ago, at the time when by rights she ought to have marked the thirtieth year of her life (the seventeenth year of her reign with Thutmose the Second) by celebrating her Jubilee-year, thereby proving that since birth she had been the chosen successor of her father.

This inscription took the form of a tremendous oath, and read as follows : “ O, you people who shall see these monuments in after-years, you who shall talk of what I have done, beware lest you say ‘ I do not know, I do not know why this was done,’ as though it were an ordinary thing that had happened ; for I swear, as the Sun-god, Re, loves me, as my father Amen favours me, as my nostrils are filled with satisfying life, as I wear the White Crown of Upper Egypt, as I appear in the Red Crown of Lower Egypt, . . . as Heaven abides, as that which Re has made shall endure, as I am unto eternity like the imperishable stars . . . I swear that these two obelisks, which are each made of a single block of durable granite, were made by my orders, and that the work on them lasted from the first day of the sixth month of the fifteenth year until the last day of the twelfth month of the sixteenth year, and that the work in the quarry occupied seven months.”

In other words she swears that they were ready just in time for the seventeenth year, and that although they were not set up until now, the ninth year of the new reign, she had been really entitled to erect them at the earlier date, for all along she had been the true sovereign.

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

At the beginning of this same ninth year she began to build for herself the great mortuary temple called 'Splendour of Splendours', and now known as Dêr el-Bahri, which is perhaps the most beautiful temple in Egypt. It was erected in that great bay formed by the mighty cliffs of the western necropolis, across the Nile from Thebes, in which the pyramid-temple built by Nebhapetre Mentuhotpe of the Eleventh Dynasty already stood.

The new temple was built in terraces of glaring white limestone, mounting one above the other up the slope at the foot of the cliffs ; and a grand causeway in the middle ascended to the shrine at the top. Along the front of two of the terraces ran covered colonnades, and the terraces themselves were laid out as magnificent, paved courtyards flanked by other colonnades.

The cliffs behind the temple formed a great, natural barrier concealing the desert canyon which is now the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, but which was then, as has been said, a desolate ravine containing at its southern end the secret tombs of Thutmose the First and Second, but otherwise untouched. Here Hetshepsut excavated a new tomb for herself, which took the form of a long tunnel running in under the cliffs from the back and ending in a burial chamber in the heart of the rock behind the shrine of her new temple built against the cliffs' face.

Her original tomb, cut into a precipice in a more remote valley, was now abandoned ; and presently she disinterred her father, Thutmose the First, from his own sepulchre, and reburied him in this new tomb of hers, so that he should be beside her throughout the ages to come. She then added a special shrine for him in the mortuary temple ; and in the sculptures

throughout this temple she introduced his figure more frequently than had been planned at first, in certain cases even writing his name over her own to give him more of a showing, and altering her figure into his—not a difficult operation, since she herself was represented with the conventional figure of a male Pharaoh.

Here and there she allowed the name of Thutmose the Third, her much repressed partner, to appear ; and still more rarely she introduced the name of her late husband, Thutmose the Second—just to pretend that she had felt no ill-will to him, and had not been a party to his sudden death. In general, however, the temple sculptures and inscriptions present one vast display of herself as a reigning Pharaoh, but with due acknowledgments to her father, Thutmose the First, who had chosen her as his successor.

When the work on this temple was just starting she despatched an expedition to the far-off land of Pount to procure incense-trees which might be planted in front of the building ; and later an account of this expedition was inscribed and illustrated upon its walls. She declared that an oracle of Amen had ordered her to undertake this task : “ Amen has commanded me ”, she said, “ to establish for him a land of Pount here on this ground, and to plant the trees of that divine country beside this temple and in its gardens.”

The expedition returned at the close of that same ninth year bringing back all manner of produce besides the living incense-trees—panther-skins, ostrich-feathers, ivory, ebony and other costly wood, antimony, gold, silver, semi-precious stones, all sorts of live animals such as giraffes, panthers, baboons and monkeys, and great quantities of incense-gum. All these things she presented to Amen, the patron of her temple, and at

a grand religious ceremony "she herself with her own hands perfumed all her body with the best of the incense, so that her fragrance was like the breath of God, and her scent was mingled with that of the land of Pount; and her skin was decorated with white gold, shining as do the stars in the canopy of heaven in view of the whole land".

Then the priests made Amen say to her: "Welcome, my sweet daughter, my favourite, who makes my beautiful monuments and purifies the throne of the great cycle of the gods for my dwelling-place, as a memorial of her love! . . . I have given you all life and peace as a gift from me, all stability from me, all health from me, all happiness from me. I have given you all countries and all lands that your heart may be glad therein; for I have long intended them for you, and the æons shall behold them until those myriads of years of your usefulness which I have conceived are spent . . .".

Hetshepsut's position was now so secure that she no longer had reason to fear anything from Thutmose the Third; and two years later, therefore, she consented at last to the marriage of her daughter Nofrure to him, so that though she had no son of her own to succeed her, she might perhaps have a grandson. The fame of Hetshepsut, the female Pharaoh, spread into far countries as the years went by, and in the tomb of Senmut there are paintings representing the arrival of envoys from distant Crete bringing rich presents to her. The splendour of the court surpassed anything known in earlier times; and the various buildings erected during the reign were magnificent.

Gradually, however, her partner upon the throne began to assert himself, and little by little his popu-

larity grew, particularly with the officers of the army who, under Hetshepsut's pacific rule, were becoming restless and were anxious to march into Syria where signs of disaffection had shown themselves. At last, in the spring of 1472 B.C., which was the twenty-second year of the reign, she was obliged to allow him to take command of the troops which were being mobilized on the eastern frontier of the Delta in case of trouble in Syria ; but in so doing she must have been aware that she was signing her own death-warrant.

Thutmose was now thirty-seven years of age or thereabouts, and had begun to realize his power ; but Hetshepsut was getting on for sixty, and her popularity was waning. Then, suddenly, the great Queen died, or very possibly was murdered ; and instantly there began what Thutmose afterwards called " that period, in those years of disagreement, when each man fought with his neighbour ". Perhaps Senmut, the most powerful man in the kingdom, made an attempt to seize the throne ; for he knew that he could expect no mercy from the king whom he had consistently insulted and browbeaten for so many years.

Thutmose dashed back to the capital at the head of a flying column ; but on his approach the friends of the late queen appear to have fled, and on the day after his arrival he caused himself to be re-crowned as sole Pharaoh. At first he showed respect to Hetshepsut's memory, and caused her to be buried in the tomb she had prepared for herself ; but he had no mercy upon her friends. The names of all the leaders of her party, including that of Senmut, were erased from all inscriptions ; and it is to be supposed that most of these men were killed. A few years later Hetshepsut's own name was attacked and some of her

buildings were torn down. Her mummy has never been found.

For the best part of a year Thutmose remained in Thebes consolidating his position, and then in the spring of the twenty-third year of the reign, 1471 B.C., he marched away at the head of his army to invade Syria and to suppress the general revolt which had developed there when the news of Hetshepsut's death had been circulated.

The appearance of Thutmose the Third can be ascertained from his mummy and his many statues. His height was not more than five feet five inches, but he was strong and wiry and of immense energy. He had a big, intelligent head, though rather a low forehead ; a great beak of a nose, which gave him rather a bird-like appearance ; upper teeth which projected somewhat ; small eyes set deep in the shadow of thick eyebrows ; and already he was probably growing bald, for there was not a hair left on his head at the time of his death.

An account of the wars of Egyptian Pharaohs in foreign countries is hardly within the scheme of this book, but a brief outline of the campaigns of Thutmose the Third must be given if only to show the astonishing energy of the man whom Hetshepsut had suppressed for so many years. In this first campaign of his the chief enemy was the King of Kadesh, a city on the Orontes, nearly a hundred miles north of Damascus ; for this monarch had placed himself at the head of a confederacy of Syrian petty-kings and princes, all of whom were in revolt against the Egyptian rule imposed upon them by Thutmose the First. At the time with which we are now dealing this King of Kadesh had marched down to the city of Megiddo

on the western edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, about fifteen miles south of the later Nazareth, and had there called all the other rebel leaders together to confer with him.

By forced marches along the coast the Pharaoh reached a point from which he could strike at Megiddo much sooner than was expected ; and having crossed the Ridge of Carmel by a difficult and narrow pass which nobody had believed he would use, he managed to cut in between the fortified city—in which most of the rebel princes were staying—and the army of Kadesh which had leisurely moved southwards to oppose his advance by the ordinary route. In the battle which ensued, the enemy was utterly defeated, and while most of the men fled across the plain and were never seen again, the King of Kadesh and a few others got round to the back wall of the city and were hauled up into it by ropes.

A short siege followed, during which the King of Kadesh escaped by night back to his own country ; and when the city surrendered he was not amongst the hundred and more rebel princes who were captured, though some of his wives were caught and were ultimately housed in Egypt. The Pharaoh's treatment of the princes was magnanimous in the extreme, and shows once more how humane were the Egyptians : he pardoned them all and reinstated them in their kingdoms and principalities, on condition that each of them should send his son and heir to be educated in Egypt and to learn its ways.

Amongst the booty taken on the battlefield and in the city, mention may be made of over two thousand horses, nearly a thousand chariots, two hundred suits of armour including the magnificent bronze armour

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

of the King of Kadesh and the Prince of Megiddo, the superb tent of the King of Kadesh with its chairs and tables made of ebony, ivory, and gold ; and a great quantity of plate and jewellery.

The arrival of the victorious Pharaoh back at Thebes was made the occasion of tremendous rejoicings, for this was the first time in the history of the country that a Pharaoh at the head of an Egyptian army had fought a pitched battle with an organized Asiatic army on foreign soil. It had been the first great international test of strength, and the Egyptians had in every way outclassed the enemy.

In celebration of the victory new shrines were built at Karnak and elsewhere, and grand religious ceremonies and processions were organized. The statue of Amen was carried in state from Karnak to Luxor and back, and huge sacrifices were made, consisting of bulls, birds, fruit, wine, and so forth, and clouds of incense ascended from hundreds of altars.

Shortly after this, Queen Nofrure, daughter of Hetshepsut and Thutmose the Second, died, and the Pharaoh presently married her younger sister, Hetshepsut-Merytre, who was also his own half-sister.

In 1470, 1469, and 1468 B.C. the Pharaoh led three more expeditions into Syria ; but these were only demonstrations in force and there was no serious fighting. Meanwhile at home vast building operations were undertaken, the work being supervised by the Prime Minister, a certain nobleman named User. This personage is described as one " who did what the upper and lower classes of the people love, looking after the poor as well as the rich, protecting the widow who had no relatives, sweetening the spirits of the

aged and infirm, setting the children in the positions held by their fathers, and making everyone happy”.

The Prime Minister's chief of works was a man named Amenemhet; and it will not be amiss to quote here an inscription which appears in his tomb under the date 1466 B.C., that is to say, the twenty-eighth year of the reign; for the words, which are supposed to be addressed to Amenemhet's spirit, give us a good idea of the Egyptian conception of life after death:

“O Amenemhet!—may your memory endure within your house, your statues within their shrines, your soul living, your body secure in its tomb, and your name set permanently in the mouths of your children for ever! O Amenemhet!—the desert (i.e. the home of the dead) stretches out her arms to you; the land of the West rejoices at your goodness, and bows to you in welcome after these years of your revered old age. . . . O Amenemhet!—may you enter into, and go out from, the western hills as you wish; may you stride through the gates of the Underworld to worship the sun when he rises from the mountains in the east, and to bow to him when he goes down behind the horizon. . . . May you still saunter as you will on the banks of the lake in your garden; may your heart still take pleasure in your flower-beds; may you refresh yourself under your trees; and may your thirst be quenched with water from your well for ever and for ever. May you emerge from the hills of the Necropolis to go to see your house in the land of the living, and hear the sound of singing and music in your hall that is on this earth, and be a guardian-spirit to your children for ever more.”

In the spring of 1465 B.C. the Pharaoh went off

upon his fifth campaign in Syria, and penetrated a hundred and fifty miles farther north than he had been before. Certain cities had rebelled against him, and these he captured. In one of them, he says, "the gardens were filled with fruit, and wine was found standing in the presses and flowed like water, while the corn on the hill-slopes was more plentiful than the sands of the sea-shore, so that the troops were overwhelmed with the quantities assigned to them . . . and the army was gorged, and was anointed with oil every day as at a feast in Egypt".

In the following year he marched to Kadesh itself and captured it; and it appears that he pardoned his old enemy, the king of that city. Then in 1463 B.C. he conducted a seventh expedition into Syria; but this time he made the journey to the Syrian coast by sea; and in 1461 B.C. he led his eighth expedition thither, penetrating this time as far as the Euphrates, where he set up his boundary-tablet on the far side of the river, opposite the tablet erected by Thutmose the First. Here he received embassies from the King of Babylon and the King of the Hittites bringing him presents.

Between 1459 and 1453 B.C. he conducted seven more campaigns, the last being the sixteenth of this amazing series; and it will be realized that as a result of his almost yearly parade through Syria the prestige of the Egyptians was raised to sublime heights. Meanwhile expeditions were sent up into the Sudan and to Pount; and in all directions the frontiers of Egypt were secured.

It was no wonder, therefore, that Thutmose was described as "a circling comet which shoots out its flames and in fire gives forth its substance", as "a

young bull, resolute, ready with its horns, irresistible ", as " a crocodile, lord of the terror that is in the water, the unapproachable one ", as " a lord of wings, who swoops down upon that which he sees ", and as " a lord of radiance, shining in the faces of the enemy ".

During the remainder of the Pharaoh's long reign of fifty-three years, he devoted himself to the administration of his dominions and to the erection of magnificent temples and other buildings ; and in this connection it may be mentioned that the two famous obelisks, one now in London nicknamed " Cleopatra's Needle ", and the other in Central Park, New York, were originally set up by him in the sun-temple at On (Heliopolis).

Towards the close of his life he allowed himself to take deferred vengeance upon Hetshepsut, by cutting out her name in many of her inscriptions ; and his wife, Hetshepsut-Merytre, was made to drop the first half of her name. In the late Queen's mortuary temple of Dêr el-Bahri, his own name and the name of his father, Thutmose the Second, were superimposed over that of Hetshepsut in several places ; and at Karnak he encased her obelisks in masonry so that only the tops of them showed above the stonework.

Yet though he thus revealed his very understandable hatred of the woman who had made so miserable the best years of his life, he was by nature kindly and generous, and his rule was just, mild, and wise. " His Majesty knew everything that occurred," said one of his ministers, " and there was nothing which he did not know. He was like Thoth, god of Wisdom, in everything, and there was no enterprise undertaken which he did not complete."

Some of his instructions to his Prime Minister have



STATUE OF THE LIONESSE-HEADED
GODDESS SEKHMET IN THE SANCTU-
ARY OF THE LITTLE TEMPLE OF
PTAH AT KARNAK



TWO PILLARS BEFORE THE SANCTUARY
AT KARNAK SET UP BY THUTMOSE III



AN ALABASTER SPHINX OF THUTMOSE III. EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

survived, and from these the following lines may be quoted : “ Be watchful ”, he said, “ over all that is done in your office, for it is the mainstay of the whole land. The position of Prime Minister is not sweet : it is bitter ; and you must see that you do everything according to law and according to the right, for it is an abominable thing to show partiality. You must regard him who is known to you like him who is unknown, and him who is closely related to you like him who is far from your circle. Do not be angry with a man unjustly, for the proper dread of princes is in their doing justice. Be not known to the people, lest they say ‘ He is only a man ’. But be severe with the arrogant, for the king loves the shy ones more than the proud.”

In the last year of the reign, when Thutmose was seventy years of age, he adopted the old Egyptian custom of appointing his son as joint-Pharaoh upon the throne with him. This young man, whose name was Amenhotpe, and whose age was about twenty-four years, was the son of Queen Hetshepsut-Merytre (herself half-sister of her husband) and grandson of the great Hetshepsut and her half-brother, Thutmose the Second ; yet in spite of these extraordinary inter-relationships, he was a man of magnificent physique, and his father could be justly proud of him.

Thutmose the Third was buried in the secret tomb which he had caused to be made at the foot of a chimney in the rocks at the south end of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, near the tomb of his father, Thutmose the Second.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Amenhotpe the Second, Thutmose the Fourth, and Amenhotpe the Third, of the Eighteenth Dynasty

THE new Pharaoh, Oekheperuere Amenhotpe, or Amenhotpe the Second, began his sole reign in 1440 B.C., after having been co-regent with Thutmose the Third for some eighteen months. As has been said, he was a handsome young man, taller than his father, and of such phenomenal strength that he is said to have been able to draw a bow which could not be drawn by any of his men.

It was not long before he was marching into Syria at the head of his army to suppress the revolts which the news of the death of the great Thutmose had occasioned ; and after crossing the Orontes he distinguished himself by taking actual part in the fighting and killing a Syrian officer in single combat. "His Majesty crossed the ford of the Orontes," says the commemorative inscription, "and he raised his hand to his eyes to scan the horizon. Then his Majesty descried a few Asiatics driving their horses and coming at a gallop. Now, his Majesty was armed with his weapons of war, and when his Majesty turned his attention (to the occupants of) one of the chariots, the others fled. Then he himself beat down their swords, and with his spear killed them, and carried off the body of the officer, his span of horses, his chariot

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

. . . two bows, a quiver full of arrows, a corselet, and a shield."

Biblical students will remember that in the Second Book of Samuel (xxi. 9) it is related that David—four centuries later—handed over seven princes to the Gibeonites, who hanged them before the Lord at the time of the barley-harvest, their bones being afterwards collected and taken away. This was evidently a harvest human-sacrifice of ancient origin ; and it is therefore significant to read that when, during this campaign, Amenhotpe was in the same neighbourhood at the same time of year, he put to death seven princes and afterwards took their bones back to Egypt with him to be exhibited as a warning to all who had rebellion in their minds. Human sacrifice was not practised, of course, in Egypt ; but in Syria and other countries it was not uncommon at this period, and if the execution of these seven princes was sacrificial, we must see in it an instance of that gradual orientalizing of the Egyptian mind which becomes so noticeable in this age of Egypt's close contact with Syria.

Few details of events during the rest of the reign have survived, though there is evidence of a considerable amount of building, and the riches of the country are indicated by references to great quantities of gold and silver used in the decoration of the temples. The death of the Pharaoh's mother, Queen Hetshepsut-Merytre, is known to have taken place, and his own marriage to his half-sister (?) Toe, or Tctie, may be mentioned.

When he died in 1415 B.C. he was buried in the secret tomb which had been made for him at the foot of a precipice on the western side of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings. This valley already con-

tained the sepulchres of Thutmose the First, Second, and Third, and Hetshepsut, but the entrance to each was concealed, and though people in general must have known by now that this was the royal burial-ground, there was no evidence as to where the tombs were situated, and the area was still a silent and apparently undisturbed ravine. Some centuries later the tomb of Amenhotpe the Second was discovered by robbers and plundered, the body of the king being dragged out of its coffin ; but in modern times, when the sepulchre was rediscovered, the mummy was replaced in the sarcophagus and is now to be seen by visitors to the tomb, lying there under a blaze of electric light.

At the Pharaoh's death there was some trouble in regard to the succession, for there were two or more of his sons who laid claims to the throne. One of these was a youth of about nineteen years of age whose name was Thutmose, and who, having been married at the fairly usual age of sixteen, was living quietly at Memphis with his wife, Mutemuya, and their infant son, Amenhotpe. This prince Thutmose appears to have come under the influence of the priests of Heliopolis who seem to have been at logger-heads with the priests of Amen at Thebes ; and just before the death of Amenhotpe the Second they had suggested to the young man that, when the time came, he might try to obtain the crown, for thus they hoped that the prestige of the old sun-god of On might be raised once more and that of Amen lowered.

The story of how this thought was put into the prince's head is told thus : " When he was a young man he used to amuse himself upon the desert uplands of Memphis, going along the road there, shooting at a

target with copper arrows, hunting wild animals, or driving his chariot whose horses were swifter than the wind, together with two members of his suite, but otherwise unknown to anybody ; and when the hour came for him to give rest to his companions he used to go to the region of Harmakhis"—the area around the Pyramids of Gizeh—"the mysterious place of the Beginning of Time, opposite Heliopolis. Now, the mighty statue of the sun-god (i.e. the Sphinx) rests in this place ; and on one of these days it happened that this prince Thutmose came driving, at the time of noon, and rested in the shadow of this great god. And a dream of sleep fell upon him at the moment when the sun was at its zenith, and he found that the majesty of this god was speaking to him with his own mouth, as a father talks with his son.

" ' Behold me, look at me, my son Thutmose,' " said the Sphinx. " ' I am your father, the sun-god, and I will give to you my kingdom on earth. You shall be at the head of the living, wearing the White Crown and the Red Crown. Yours shall be the land in its length and breadth, and that which the eye of the Lord of All shines upon, and the revenues of Upper and Lower Egypt, shall be yours, and the great tribute of all countries, for a long term of years. My countenance is upon you, and my desire is towards you ; and to me you, on your part, shall be a protector, for my present condition is as though I were sick, the sand of this desert whereon I rest having overwhelmed me. Give attention to me, and cause that to be done which I have desired, knowing that you are my son and my protector. Come close : I am with you, I am your guide.' And when he had finished speaking, the prince awoke, and, understand-

ing the words of this god, he kept silence in his heart."

As soon as his father died the prince was hailed as king by the Heliopolitans, and the priesthood of Amen at Thebes was obliged to accept him and to endure with what grace it could the triumph of the sun-god of the north. The new Pharaoh ascended the throne as Menkheperure Thutmose, or Thutmose the Fourth ; and he immediately took steps to have the encroaching sand removed from around the Sphinx, and to put the story of his dream on record.

As his body, now in the Cairo Museum, shows, he was an elegant and somewhat effeminate young man of medium height, having a handsome face and wavy brown hair combed back from his intellectual forehead, small ears pierced for the wearing of ear-rings, and thin, delicate hands. He was not of strong constitution, and he died young ; but he was nevertheless eager to prove himself a worthy successor of his fighting father and grandfather, and during his brief tenure of the throne he led his armies into Syria and up into the Sudan.

East of the Euphrates, in the corner of the north-eastern Syria of modern times and in southern Kurdistan, lay the Iranian kingdom of Mitanni, a highly civilized state ruled by a monarch named Artatama. The Euphrates divided this kingdom from the Syrian possessions of the Pharaoh ; and Thutmose considered it advisable to make an alliance with Artatama so that these far-off dominions should not be attacked, with which object in view he sent an embassy to the Mitannian court asking for the hand of one of the king's daughters in marriage.

This was something new in Egyptian policy. The

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

idea of a Pharaoh of the sacred race of the sun-god marrying a mere foreign princess would previously have been unthinkable, but Egypt was now a world-power, and it was slowly dawning on the rather arrogant Egyptian mind that there were other civilized lands besides the Valley of the Nile. To the proud King Artatama also, the idea, apparently, was new, and at first he refused to consider it; but at last he agreed, and the princess was sent. This Mitannian girl, however, was obliged to take her place as one of the secondary wives of the Pharaoh; and his first wife Mutemuya, who was apparently an Egyptian lady of royal blood, remained in favour, though presently she had to concede the position of Queen to a daughter of the late Amenhotpe the Second, who, being heiress of the kingdom, was married to her brother, the new Pharaoh, soon after his accession, in order to make his claim to the throne legal according to the Egyptian matriarchal system.

It was in the seventh year of his reign that a rebellion in the Sudan obliged him to lead his army up into the far south; but this and his earlier expedition into Syria were his only military achievements. His building-works, however, were extensive; and mention may be made of his erection, at Karnak, of a great obelisk which had been quarried by his grandfather, Thutmose the Third, but had been left lying unfinished on the ground. This is the obelisk which now stands in front of the Church of St. John Lateran in Rome.

The reign of Thutmose the Fourth marks a great change in Egyptian artistic canons, and it would seem that the influence of the Heliopolitans, which is now very marked in other ways, contributed to the modi-

fication of the rigid conventions upheld until this age by the Thebans. Moreover, the enormous wealth of the country derived from the Syrian conquests had produced a condition of luxury in the Nile Valley such as had never been known before ; and a certain simplicity which had always characterized the outlook of the Egyptians, and had been reflected in their art, was now lost in the invasion of foreign ideas emanating from the insidious East.

There is a general orientalizing of the nation, and one notices a new expression of voluptuousness and languor in the painted or sculptured figures of men and women, the long, sleepy, 'almond'-eyes being first seen in the paintings of this age.

Egypt, of course, was now full of foreigners, and the hundreds of young Syrian princes who lived there as hostages, or who were being educated in Egyptian universities prior to taking up their duties in their own countries, seem to have had their influence on the thought and taste of the time. The fortunes of the country, too, were now bound up with those of Asia ; and the policies of the Pharaohs were for the first time dictated by conditions outside the Nile Valley. The reign of Thutmose the Fourth marks the transition ; and we begin to find ourselves in that new and sophisticated Egypt which presently had to fight for its very life with those Asiatic nations who now were under the Pharaoh's heel.

Thutmose only reigned nine years, and his early death in 1406 B.C., at an age which is proved by his mummy to have been hardly more than twenty-eight, cut short a career full of promise. Although he was physically something of a weakling, it is evident, as has been said, that he had been eager to emulate the

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

warlike deeds of his forefathers ; and it is to be noticed that he paid particular respect to the shrines of early conquerors such as Sesusri the Third of the Twelfth Dynasty, and Ahmose the founder of his own line of the Eighteenth Dynasty. One can see that he longed to be a great conqueror ; but a single glance at his delicate, handsome face is sufficient to show that his hope was vain. He was not fitted to be a warrior.

His death must have caused consternation at the Egyptian court ; for his son, Amenhotpe, could hardly have been more than twelve years of age, and the accession of so young a boy was little short of a disaster. Amenhotpe's only sister had recently died, and there was no royal princess and heiress of the kingdom to whom he could be formally married so as to establish his right to the throne according to Egyptian matriarchal principles. Nevertheless he had to be accepted, and he was crowned under the names Nebmaere Amenhotpe, or Amenhotpe the Third as he is now called.

Under the influence of the Orient, and in view of the particular circumstances, the customary age at which a boy was married was reduced ; and immediately after his accession the twelve- or thirteen-year-old Pharaoh was married to a girl named Tiy who was doubtless selected because she was the most eligible little lady in the land. Her father was a great noble named Iuie, and her mother, Tuiiu, was evidently of royal descent, since she is described later as '*Royal mother of the King's wife*' : and from the first the young queen, who was probably no more than about ten years of age at her marriage, was given the greatest prominence and was called '*Mistress of the Two Lands*', which suggests that there was nobody who

had a better claim to be regarded as the legal heiress according to the Egyptian system of female descent.

In the second year of the reign, when the boy-Pharaoh was thirteen or fourteen years of age, he was allowed to take part in his first hunting expedition ; and he was so proud of the event that an account of it was put into writing.

“ This is the wonderful thing which happened to his Majesty,” says the inscription. “ A man came to his Majesty, and said, ‘ There are wild cattle up in the high desert, in the direction of the district of Sheta.’ His Majesty therefore sailed down-stream in the royal barge, beginning the propitious journey in the evening, and arriving safely at the district of Sheta next morning. Then his Majesty appeared at horse ” —a phrase meaning in his chariot—“ his whole company being behind him, while the military officers and citizens and their children were commanded to keep watch for the wild cattle. Then his Majesty gave orders that these wild cattle should be rounded up into an enclosure, and he also commanded that they should be counted, and their total was a hundred and seventy head. The total number which his Majesty brought down in the hunt on that day was fifty-six head.”

The cattle were attacked with bows-and-arrows and long spears, and no doubt the whole company of huntsmen took an energetic part in the slaughter which was accredited solely to the young Pharaoh. The herd was probably stampeded along a valley into a wall of rope-nets, and the creatures were shot down while they were entangled and were trying to break through—at least that was the method of hunting most usual in ancient times.

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

“His Majesty then rested four days to give fire to his horses,” the inscription goes on; “and then he appeared at horse a second time, and the total number which he brought down in this hunt was twenty head, making a total of seventy-six head.” That is to say, about a hundred got away, out of the whole herd.

In the fifth year of the reign, when the king was about seventeen years of age, he went up to the Sudan with a military expedition to chastise certain rebellious negro tribes; but as this is his only known campaign, and as he does not appear ever to have gone over to Syria, he is not to be regarded as much of a soldier. He continued to be very fond of hunting, however, and during the first ten years of his reign he is said to have killed over a hundred lions, this average of ten lions a year being one of which any sportsman might be proud.

His mummy, now in the Cairo Museum, shows that he was a small man, and at this time he may have already given some indications of becoming fat in later life. His face was handsome, and in his straight nose there was nothing left of the birdlike beak of his great-grandfather, Thutmose the Third. The youth of his parents, however, and the series of close intermarriages in his pedigree, told against him; and being neither robust in body nor strong in mind, he seems to have been dominated by his capable wife, Queen Tiy.

The palace in which the young Pharaoh lived was built on the edge of the desert on the west side of the Nile, opposite the city of Thebes. It was a light but spacious building, constructed of brick and wood, the walls, floors and ceilings of the rooms being of stucco exquisitely painted. In front of the building was a flat, sandy plain which merged into the fields leading

down to the Nile, and behind it towered the magnificent Theban hills.

In September of the eleventh year of the reign (1396 B.C.) when the floods were out, Queen Tiy conceived the idea of forming a lake at the end of the palace grounds by digging away the earth and sand from the area where the fields and the desert met, and letting the flood-water pour into it. Thousands of labourers were turned on to the work, and in sixteen days the water was able to be let in, and the king and queen were rowed upon the lake in the royal barge. Later it was deepened, and trees were planted around it ; and to this day the huge, rectangular site, now called Birket Habu, is still visible.

Life at the palace and in the houses of the rich was more luxurious and more elegant at this time than it had ever been before or ever was again in Egypt ; and the great cities such as Thebes and Memphis were probably more splendid than any in other countries. The king's mortuary temple built on the western bank of the Nile at Thebes, for instance, is described as being "of fine white sandstone, wrought with gold throughout, its floor being inlaid with silver, all its doors with electrum, having statues of every splendid and costly stone, and the sanctuary being wrought with gold and many precious stones". In front of this temple were two huge seated figures of the Pharaoh, one on either side of the main gateway, each sixty-five feet high and each made out of a single block of stone. They are now known as the Colossi, but since the temple behind them has been almost entirely destroyed, they seem to-day to be two monstrous and lonely figures placed without apparent reason in the midst of the fields near the desert's edge.

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

The main part of the temple of Luxor also belongs to this reign, and its stately forecourt, surrounded by a double row of superb columns, is one of the great sights of modern Egypt. "Its walls were of electrum," we read, "its pavement of silver, and all its doors were wrought with gold." From this temple all the way to the great temple of Karnak a magnificent avenue was made, eighty feet wide, on each side of which was a row of some five hundred huge ram-headed sphinxes—about a thousand in all. This wonderful avenue, both in largeness and splendour of conception and in artistic and manual labour, was an achievement without a rival of its kind in the ancient world.

The interiors of the great houses of this time were bright with beautiful mural paintings : white pigeons and gorgeous butterflies were painted upon the ceilings against a background of sky-blue ; many-coloured wild-duck were seen amongst the reeds and lotus-flowers painted upon the floor, while in the blue water brilliant fishes were shown ; and on the walls wild animals were represented moving about amongst the trees, or flights of birds were seen rising from clumps of red poppies. Sometimes the entire ceiling of a room was covered with hanging clusters of grapes carved in wood and painted green or blue ; while delicately carved and brightly painted pillars, festooned with flowers and ribbons, supported the beams.

Fragments of countless thousands of wine-jars and blue faience drinking-cups have been found in the ruins of the palace ; and contemporary paintings show us some of the exquisitely wrought bowls of gold and silver which graced the tables. The beds, couches, and chairs were heavily cushioned, and covered with

rich embroideries ; and everywhere gold was to be seen and charming inlay of jasper, beryl, crystal, carnelian, lapis-lazuli, ivory, and so forth. The gardens were full of flowers and trees introduced from Syria ; and every important house had its artificial lake, stocked with fish and fragrant with the scent of water-lilies.

Costume had become much more elaborate than formerly, and the nobles wore the softest and most diaphanous linen, sometimes interwoven with threads of gold or embroidered with flowers. Both men and women wore stately wigs, as did our own forefathers of two hundred years ago ; and these were pomaded with perfumes and decked with flowers, while garlands of flowers were hung over the shoulders on all festive occasions. There was music at every party ; and singers, dancing girls, harpers, flutists, and guitar-players entertained the guests. In the streets the nobles went by in gilded chariots drawn by pairs of horses with tossing ostrich-plumes on their heads ; while the Pharaoh and his queen were sometimes borne along in golden carrying-chairs upon the shoulders of their servants, long-handled fans of dyed ostrich-feathers being held above their heads, and incense being burnt in front of them.

After Queen Tiy had grown to womanhood she bore several daughters to her husband, but it was not until the twenty-fourth year of the reign that a son and heir was born, who was called Amenhotpe, like his father. Meanwhile, however, several foreign potentates had sent their daughters to Egypt to become secondary wives of the Pharaoh ; and, in particular, mention may be made of the Mitannian princess Gilukhipa who arrived with over three hundred ladies-

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

in-waiting, and was married to the king, thereafter being relegated, however, to the background by Queen Tiy, who of course would brook no rivals. In the case of a Babylonian princess who was thus married to the Pharaoh, her brother, King Kadashman-Enlil of Babylon, had reason to complain that the girl had been so effectually eclipsed that he did not know whether she were alive or dead : his letter to this effect is still to be seen.

Meanwhile, there was throughout the reign an increasing undercurrent of religious strife which must have greatly disturbed the brilliant court at Thebes. It will be remembered that the priesthood of the sun-god at Heliopolis had been instrumental in putting Thutmose the Fourth on the throne, and that there had been some attempt to deprive the rival priesthood of Amen at Thebes of its autocratic power—a power which, generations ago, it had cleverly built up by identifying Amen with the sun-god under the name Amen-Re (Ammon-Ra). The weak Amenhotpe the Third had easily fallen under the influence of the Amen-priests, but the sympathies of Queen Tiy seem to have been with the Heliopolitans whose worship was much more akin to that of the dominant faiths of Syria, and therefore had an appeal more suited to imperial needs than any which the narrower worship of the old Theban god could put forward.

Amen and his priests stood for the rigid conventions, and for that arrogant spirit of nationalism which caused the Egyptians to despise all foreigners ; but the sun-worship of Heliopolis was easily adapted to the usages of Egypt's new empire, and was much wider in its views and much more broadminded in its acceptance of new ideas.

For many years a certain aspect of the solar deity had been coming into prominence under the name Aton. Aton was originally the actual disc of the sun, the fiery orb itself, as distinct from Re who was the god living in that orb ; but now this new solar cult was developing, which looked to Aton as the intangible life-power or energy manifest in the sun itself and in the warm sunlight—the power, that is to say, by which Re himself lived. This cult represented an approximation of Egyptian religious ideas to those of Syria, where the sun-god was widely worshipped under the name ‘ Adhôn ’, or Adon, ‘ Lord ’.

Queen Tiy and a large part of the court were now interesting themselves in Aton-worship as a new and imperial expression of the old solar religion of Heliopolis ; but this tendency was bitterly opposed by the Amen-priesthood which identified the rising cult with new and foreign ideas in philosophy, art, and general life. The great champion of Amen at this time was a certain wise old philosopher and statesman called Amenhotpe, who is usually distinguished from other persons of his name by being termed Amenhotpe—son-of-Hapi, and whose wisdom was remembered even in Greek times, the Greeks calling him Amenophis-son-of-Papis. According to Manetho (as quoted by Josephus in his *Contra Apion*) this Amenhotpe advised the Pharaoh to rid the country of certain ‘ unclean ’ people, in whom we may see the partisans of Aton ; and when his advice was not heeded he killed himself.

Actual records of this period show that the wise Amenhotpe died at the beginning of the thirty-first year of the reign (1376 B.C.), and that the Pharaoh caused a mortuary shrine to be built for him, the ruins of which still exist. But this uncompromising

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

old advocate of the priesthood of Amen was evidently so much disliked by the members of the new movement that there was grave reason to suppose that his shrine would be desecrated ; and the Pharaoh therefore caused a terrible curse to be inscribed and exhibited there, calling down punishments upon anybody who should damage the place or divert the revenues with which it was endowed.

This, however, was the last recorded act of Amen-hotpe the Third ; and although he did not die until six years later (1370 B.C.), he was either deposed or confined to the palace, Queen Tiy becoming the regent of the kingdom. It is possible that he was really ill or insane during these years, and certainly that explanation of his disappearance from public life was circulated, for on two occasions, a miracle-working statue of the goddess Ishtar was sent to him from northern Syria in the hope that he might be cured by it. But in view of subsequent events it is perhaps more likely that his eclipse was due to the triumph of the Aton-worshippers over those of Amen.

When he died he was buried in the lonely tomb which had been made for him in a desert valley leading out of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, far away from the sepulchres of his ancestors ; and his body is now in the Cairo Museum. The mummy shows that he was probably a little under fifty years of age at the time of his death.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Amenhotpe the Fourth (Akhnaton), Smenkhkhere, Tut-enkhamen, Ay, and Horemhab, of the Eighteenth Dynasty

THE only son of Amenhotpe the Third and Queen Tiye was about thirteen years of age at his father's death in 1370 B.C., and ascended the throne under the names Neferkheperure Amenhotpe, or Amenhotpe the Fourth. Like his father he had been married at about the age of twelve; but although he had sisters, the court did not follow the old custom of marrying the Pharaoh to his eldest sister—who was the legal heiress of the kingdom according to the Egyptian matriarchal system—and the chosen bride was not an immediate member of the royal family.

Her name was Nofretiti or Nefertiti, and it would seem that she was the daughter of a certain great Egyptian nobleman named Ay, who thereafter was always addressed as 'King's Father-in-Law, Ay'. Her mother was dead, and Ay's second wife, named Tiye, was spoken of as the Great Nurse or Foster-Mother of the Queen. Nefertiti was probably of about the same age as her boy-husband, that is to say, about thirteen; and it was not until she was sixteen or seventeen that she had her first child, a girl.

Other wives were soon given to the young Pharaoh,

amongst these being a Mitannian princess named Tadukhipa, niece of that Gilukhipa who, it will be recalled, had been married to Amenhotpe the Third. (Egyptologists have sometimes thought that this Tadukhipa is to be identified with Nefertiti, and that Ay was the latter's foster-father and not her real father ; but the evidence is against this, and, indeed, Nefertiti's features, as seen in the famous head in the Berlin Museum, are clearly Egyptian and not foreign.)

From his earliest childhood the new Pharaoh had been brought up in the faith of Aton ; and at his accession it was arranged that he should assume the nominal office of solar High Priest, or, rather, that that office should be vested in the crown, as it had been in the Fifth Dynasty. This must have greatly angered the priests of Amen ; and there may well have been consternation in their ranks when it was announced that a temple dedicated to Aton was to be erected in the sacred precincts of Amen at Karnak. Hardly had this shrine been built than the storm broke. Nobody knows exactly what happened, but at the beginning of the fourth year of the reign (1367 B.C.), when the Pharaoh was sixteen years old—the age at which an Egyptian was considered to enter manhood—he suddenly decided to abandon Thebes and to found for himself a new capital where the worship of Aton might be carried on without interference. At the same time he changed his name from Amenhotpe to Akhnaton (sometimes read Akhenaten, and incorrectly Khuenaten) so as to mark the severance of his connection with the great Theban god.

In after-years the Amen-priests let it be understood that they had turned him out of Thebes with eighty thousand of his followers ; and to some extent this

may have been true, for they were probably able to make things so unpleasant for him that he could have had no desire to remain in a place where he was surrounded by temples of Amen, and where the figure of that god looked down at him from mural paintings and sculptures wherever he went.

The site—now known as Tell el-Amarna—which he chose for his new city was on the east bank of the Nile, about half-way between Thebes and Memphis, a few miles south of the modern town of Melawi. Near the site were the ancient alabaster-quarries of Het-nub ; and thus his enemies were able to say afterwards that the ‘heretics’, as the Aton-worshippers came to be called, had been sent away like criminals to the quarries. Actually, however, Akhnaton chose the location, as he himself tells us, because the wide sweep of clean, flat ground which lay close to the river at this point “belonged not to a god nor to a goddess”—that is to say, it was virgin soil, unpolluted by any religious connections.

The evidence seems to indicate that, though the young Pharaoh was influenced by his mother and her circle during his minority, he was himself the leader and instigator of the movement from the fourth year of the reign onwards—in which regard it may be remarked that there are parallel cases in history of a youth of sixteen assuming the rôle of reformer and religious teacher—Caliph El Hakkîm, for instance. He was not healthy, and was perhaps subject to fits ; but he was a good-looking youth with a big head, delicate features, and dreamy eyes. As a boy his face was fairly plump, but as he grew older it became thin and pointed at the chin, and while his chest and shoulders lost their earlier robust appearance, he

developed something of a paunch and became thick and ungainly about the hips.

He called his new city 'Horizon of Aton', and during the next two or three years it took shape under his direction at high speed, the palace being ready for him by the sixth year of the reign. This palace was even more charmingly decorated with paintings upon walls, ceilings and floors, than that of his parents at Thebes ; and beautiful gardens and lakes were laid out around it. The houses of the chief nobles who had followed him were handsome and spacious, and each was surrounded by its walled garden, wherein exotic flowers and transplanted trees soon took root and flourished in the abundantly watered earth.

A splendid temple dedicated to Aton was erected somewhat along the lines of the ancient sun-temple at Heliopolis ; and there were also several lesser temples of this god, and a special shrine dedicated to the Pharaoh's ancestors. The streets of the city were broad, and there were various parks in which were kiosks, colonnaded pavilions, and artificial lakes with little islands in them approached by delicate bridges. Traces of some of these gardens and lakes have been found under the blown sand, and the excavations have revealed the actual roots of the trees and plants.

By one who lived there the city is described as "great in loveliness, delighting the eyes with her beauty", being "like a glimpse of heaven" ; and although the modern excavations have only laid bare the foundations of the main buildings, one can see that the whole place was planned with delicate taste and supreme elegance. In the desert cliffs towards the east, which formed the backing of the city, the rock-cut tombs and mortuary shrines of the nobles

were made ; and on the walls of these there are many representations of the houses and palaces, and the inscriptions throw a good deal of light on the life that was lived in these happy surroundings.

All these inscriptions insist that Akhnaton himself taught his people the beauties of the new faith, and it is the constant claim of the nobles that they understood the doctrines and had taken to heart all that the royal dreamer had told them. This, however, may be doubted ; for Akhnaton's religion was far in advance of any known faith of the time, and he had so completely divested his mind of old beliefs and superstitions, that few of the older generation could have shared the uncontaminated clarity of his thoughts.

The young king explained Aton as the intangible, formless, but ever-present and loving Father and Mother of mankind, made intelligible in the all-pervading sunshine and manifest in the sun itself ; yet Aton was not the sun, but the undefined "energy behind the sun"—the source of that life-force which penetrated to this earth in the sun's heat and caused everything to live and grow. Aton had no form, human or otherwise, and no statues or pictures of him were made : he was a purely spiritual essence, understood as absolute Good, absolute Truth, absolute Love, and absolute Happiness. All that was happy on earth was a demonstration of Aton : song, music, love, laughter, health, well-being, comfort, the fruits of the earth, wine, flowers, natural beauty, the singing of the birds, the sound of the wind, the ripple of water, and so forth—all were expressions of Aton.

At first, and as late as the fifth year of the reign, the old gods were allowed to be mentioned and had some sort of vague recognition ; but gradually Akhnaton

imposed a complete monotheism upon his followers in the City of the Horizon, and although he did not yet order the old temples in other parts of Egypt to be closed, he aimed at the ultimate suppression of polytheism throughout the country.

The symbol of his faith was the disc of the sun from which the rays stretched down like arms, each ending in a caressing hand ; and the creed was well expressed in a hymn which Akhnaton himself composed, and from which the following quotations may be made :

“ Thy Dawning is beautiful in the horizon of heaven,
 O living Aton, Beginning of life !
 When thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven
 Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.
 Though thou art afar, thy rays are on earth ;
 Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day.
 When thou sendest forth thy rays
 The two lands of Egypt are in daily festivity,
 Awake and standing upon their feet,
 For thou hast raised them up.
 Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing,
 Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning.
 Then in all the world they do their work.
 All cattle are satisfied with herbage, all trees and plants flourish.
 The birds flutter in the marshes, their wings spread in adoration to thee.
 All the sheep dance upon their feet,
 All winged things fly : they live when thou hast shone upon them.
 The ships sail up-stream and down-stream alike.
 The fish in the river leap up before thee,
 And thy rays are in the midst of the great sea.
 Thou art he who createst the man-child in woman,
 Who givest life to the son in the body of his mother,
 Who soothest him that he may not weep,
 A nurse even in the womb.
 When the chick crieth in the egg-shell
 Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive,

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

He cometh forth from the egg to chirp with all his might.
O Lord, how manifold are all thy works !
How excellent are thy designs, O Lord of eternity !
Thou art lifetime itself, and life is lived in thee."

The general lay-out of this hymn is almost exactly similar to that of the 104th Psalm, and some thirty of the actual lines are almost word for word identical with the lines of that famous Psalm. The so-called Psalms of David in the Bible are a collection of hymns derived from various sources, and it seems certain that this 104th Psalm is an adaptation of Akhnaton's hymn, changed and edited to suit the Hebrew faith.

Akhnaton believed that Aton was "the Father and Mother of all creation", foreigners as well as Egyptians, and in this he carried religious thought forward by a far greater stride than is at once noticeable ; for we are inclined to forget to-day how narrow and national was the range of benevolence of one of the old gods. Indeed it may be said that Akhnaton's conception of Aton represents man's earliest known attainment of the idea of an all-loving spirit of Goodness unrestricted by racial considerations. Aton was "the Lord of Love", who "alone made beauty of form", who was "Lord of Fate", and whose thought was "the event which produced life". "There is no poverty for him who hath set Aton in his heart ; for such an one cannot say 'O, that I had.' " "O, Aton, thou art alone," said Akhnaton, "but infinite vitalities are in thee by means of which to give life to thy creatures." "When thou bringest life to men's hearts by thy beauty there is indeed life."

In the sixth year of the reign, when the Pharaoh took up his residence in his new city, he caused boundary-stones to be placed at the limits of the plain

upon which it was built ; and on these he recorded his oath that he would not ever again travel beyond these limits, but would remain, like the Pope in the Vatican, shut up in his sacred city for the rest of his life. But he had no wish to be a sacrosanct recluse : he was anxious, in fact, to show himself to his people as a simple man in his habits, although he was ' the beloved son of Aton ' in his nature.

He liked his artists to represent him as a devoted husband and father, and it is evident that he wished to set an example of happy and loving domestic life. Between the third and the fifteenth years of the reign Queen Nefertiti presented him with seven daughters, one of whom died and another was sent to Babylonia to be married to the king of that far country ; and Akhnaton always caused himself to be represented as a happy father, playing with these little girls, nursing them on his knee, or kissing them, and as a devoted husband, fondling or kissing his wife and calling her ' mistress of his heart '.

Being a very apostle of truth, he encouraged his artists to represent him and the members of his family with somewhat disconcerting fidelity. Queen Nefer-titi, like so many Egyptians in modern times, had developed a cataract in one eye ; and in the famous head of her now in the Berlin Museum this defect is plainly shown. Many of his own portraits are far from flattering ; and some of those from the hands of the foreign artists in his employ are grotesque. As in our own day, so in his, there was a ' modernist ' movement which made havoc of academic conventions ; and the influence of this school was so widespread that an expert can now spot the work of this period at a glance.

In the twelfth year of the reign his mother, Queen Tiy, who had continued to live at Thebes, came to visit him in the City of the Horizon, for it would seem that Akhnaton regarded this as his *sed-hab* or Jubilee Year. In ancient Egypt a Pharaoh's jubilee marked the thirtieth year after his proclamation as heir to the throne ; but Akhnaton, in his general rejection of old religious traditions, dispensed with this hitherto invariable custom, and chose this year for some other reason now forgotten—perhaps because it was the sixth year since he shut himself up in his sacred city, the twelfth of his reign, and the twenty-fourth of his life.

Great festivities were held in honour of Queen Tiy's visit, and a special temple was erected in which she might worship Aton ; but shortly after her return to Thebes she died, and was buried in a small tomb in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, a few yards from the tomb in which her mother and father had been buried.

Shortly after this there seems to have been some attempt at revolution led by the priests of Amen at Thebes ; and thereupon Akhnaton gave orders for the obliteration of that god's name in every inscription in which it occurred throughout the kingdom. This order was carried out with such thoroughness that to-day the ancient mural inscriptions are pockmarked with scars which show where the offending name has been hammered out ; and even the tomb of Queen Tiy was re-opened so that the word might be erased out of the name of her husband, Amenhotpe the Third, who had been mentioned there in the mortuary inscriptions. Towards the end of his reign he gave orders for the obliteration of the names of the other gods as well, but this decree was not fully carried out.

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

Meanwhile, affairs in Syria were in very bad shape. In modern times a series of letters now famous as the ' Tell el-Amarna Letters ' were discovered in the ruins of Akhnaton's city : they are in the form of tablets of baked clay inscribed in cuneiform characters, and are the actual correspondence which passed between the Pharaoh and the rulers of Syria, Babylon, and other countries. From them the story of these troubles in Akhnaton's Asiatic dominions can be pieced together ; and we can see to-day how his pacific policy, and perhaps his actual conscientious objection to war, lost him the empire which had been won by his forefathers.

He had earnestly believed that it was possible to retain the loyalty of all Syria by uniting the people to him in the worship of Aton. He had hoped to bind together the many countries over which he ruled, by giving them a single religion of love and happiness ; and there is no more tragic story in ancient history than that told in these letters, revealing as it does his disillusionment and the fall of the Egyptian empire.

The Amorites, advancing along the sea-coast of Syria, took city after city from the Egyptians. The citizens of the great city of Tunip wrote to Akhnaton imploring him to send them aid. " Tunip, thy city, weeps," they wrote, " and her tears are flowing, and there is no help for us. For years we have been sending to our lord, the King of Egypt, but there has come to us not a word, no, not one."

Ribaddi, the loyal king of Byblos, wrote letter after letter begging for reinforcements ; but none were sent. Abdkhiba, who was in command at Jerusalem, wrote saying : " Let the king take care of his land, and let him send troops, for if no troops come in this year

the whole territory of my lord the king will perish " ; and to this letter he added a postscript addressed to Akhnaton's secretary, saying : " Bring these words plainly before the king ; the whole land is going to ruin."

Meanwhile, a people called the Khabiri, whom scholars are inclined to identify with the forerunners of the Hebrews, were pouring into Syria from the south ; and there are many letters from loyal vassals of Egypt imploring protection from them, and saying that the invaders are everywhere victorious.

The messengers who brought these letters, however, found Akhnaton absorbed in his religious interests, preaching love, peace, beauty and joy to his people, and deaf and blind to the struggles of his faithful vassals and generals to hold Syria for the Egyptians. The Pharaoh would not fight, and gradually his loyal supporters were killed or driven into exile, and the tribute ceased to be sent in.

Meanwhile Akhnaton had married his eldest daughter to a prince named Smenkhkhere, whose relationship to the royal house is unknown ; and this personage seems to have ascended the throne as joint-Pharaoh during the last two years of Akhnaton's life, when Akhnaton himself was apparently in failing health. Then came the end : Akhnaton died in the seventeenth year of his reign and the twenty-ninth of his age, just about thirteen years after he had proclaimed his great religious revolution. At the same time Smenkhkhere died or was dethroned, and no more is heard of him.

The only heir to the throne was a child of ten named Tutenkhaton, who was probably Akhnaton's son by a secondary wife ; and on his accession he was married to Akhnaton's third daughter Enkhsenpeaton,

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

the second daughter having died. Enkhsenpeaton was only nine years of age ; and these two children, who were now king and queen of Egypt, were entirely in the hands of the distracted court. Nothing is known of the fate of Akhnaton's wife, Nefertiti ; but it may be supposed that she went back to live with her father, who was the most important personage at court, and who was still always known as ' King's Father-in-law, Ay '.

The first business in the new reign was the burial of Akhnaton in the tomb which he had prepared for himself in the desert east of the City of the Horizon. The body, wrapped in sheets of gold, was placed in a magnificent coffin overlaid with gold-leaf, along the top of which ran the following inscription in inlaid letters of semi-precious stones and coloured glass : " The beautiful Prince, the Chosen-one of the Sun, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, living in the Truth, Lord of the Two Lands, Akhnaton, the beautiful child of the living Aton, whose name shall live for ever and ever."

Below the foot of the coffin a short prayer to Aton was inscribed, which was probably composed by Akhnaton himself. It reads : " I breathe the sweet breath which comes forth from thy mouth. I behold thy beauty every day. It is my desire that I may hear thy sweet voice, even the north wind, that my limbs may be rejuvenated with life through love of thee. Give me thy hands, holding thy spirit, that I may receive it and may live by it. Call thou upon my name unto eternity, and it shall never fail."

But shortly after the funeral the court decided to abandon the City of the Horizon and to return to Thebes. A compromise was effected with the priests

of Amen ; and as Akhnaton's memory was still regarded with respect, it was thought best to disinter him, to bring his body back to the home of his ancestors, and to bury it in the tomb of his mother, Queen Ti, in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings.

The return of the court was celebrated with the wildest rejoicings, and the famous colonnade in the temple of Luxor was built in honour of the event, the walls being decorated with scenes representing the enthusiasm of the people, who are shown dancing, beating drums and blowing trumpets in their excitement. The abandonment of the City of the Horizon was a triumph for Amen, but there was not yet any counter-attack upon Aton : an attempt, in fact, was made to reconcile the two religions. Nevertheless, the Pharaoh's name was changed from Tutenkhaton to Tutenkhamen, and that of his queen from Enkhsen-peaton to Enkhsenamen.

During the thirteen years of Akhnaton's Utopia the temples of Amen and the other gods had been neglected and those of Amen finally closed ; and an inscription dated in the reign of Tutenkhamen records the work of restoration. "The temples of the gods", it reads, "had come upon bad times, their courts being a road for common feet. The land was overridden with plagues, and the gods were neglected." But "His Majesty searched for what was useful for Amen", made his image in pure gold, raised monuments to the other gods, and multiplied their estates.

The eastern Delta was full of Asiatic settlers at the time, and when the young Pharaoh was growing towards manhood he took a personal part in the direction of military operations against these intruders, and we read of "that day of the slaughter of the

Asiatics", which seems to indicate that some definite battle with them occurred during the process of their ejection from Egypt.

Now Manetho states (according to Eusebius) that it was at about this time that the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt took place ; and in a long quotation in the *Contra Apion* of Josephus Manetho gives an account of the " thirteen fatal years " of Akhnaton's ' heresy ', as it came to be called in after times, and in describing how the old gods of Egypt were persecuted, states that one of the leaders of the movement was Moses.

Modern scholars have always been very much divided as to the date of the Exodus, but this traditional date is so fully supported by such evidence as we possess that there seems no reason to reject it. The evidence from the Bible is contradictory. On the one hand it is stated (1 Kings vi. 1) that four hundred and eighty years elapsed between the Exodus and the building of the temple in Jerusalem (973 B.C.), which would give the date 1453 B.C., the middle of the reign of Thutmose the Third. On the other hand, the genealogies recorded in 1 Chronicles vi, give eleven or twelve generations between the Exodus and the time of David (1000 B.C.) ; and, allowing the usual three generations to a century, this takes us back to just about the age of Tutenkhamen. Hebrew tradition states that the period of Israelite oppression in Egypt was two hundred or two hundred and forty years ; and since all are agreed that the oppression began at the overthrow of the Hyksos kings at the end of the Seventeenth Dynasty, the latter figure brings us to somewhere about the Tutenkhamen period.

This, however, is not the place to argue the matter ; and it need only be said that the probabilities point

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

to Tutenkhamen as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, the date of that event being perhaps 1346 B.C., the last year of his reign. Moses, who is undoubtedly an historical character, may well have chosen this moment to lead his countrymen out of Egypt, and to join hands with the above-mentioned Khabiri who were pushing into the later Palestine from the south. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt would thus have been part of the great movement of Semitic tribesmen who were seeking new homes in the north ; and it need not be pointed out how wide a field of thought is opened up by the supposition that Moses lived through the great phase of Egyptian monotheism.

Tutenkhamen was about nineteen years of age at his death, and his body shows him to have been a handsome youth, about five feet six inches in height, having a gentle expression, refined features, and eyes with very long lashes. He had not been expected to die so early, and his tomb in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings was not large. Its recent discovery revealed the magnificence of the usual burial equipment of a Pharaoh ; and the reader will probably be familiar with the marvellous objects found in the sepulchre.

He died childless, and the throne passed to his nearest male kinsman, Ay, the father of Akhnaton's queen, Nefertiti, and grandfather of Tutenkhamen's widow Enkhsenamen, who, however, made a bid for the throne herself by entering into correspondence with the King of the Hittites, the rising power in the land north of Syria : she said that her husband had died, that she had no children, and that if she were to marry the son of the Hittite king she would make him Pharaoh. Nothing came of these negotiations,



STATUETTE OF AN UNKNOWN WOMAN
PROBABLY OF THE REIGNS OF TUTENKHAMEN OR AY



TEMPLE OF LUXOR
THE COLUMNS OF THE GREAT FORECOURT OF AMENOPHIS III LOOKING NORTH-EAST

[To face p. 162

however, and the elderly Ay reigned for four years, during which time he made himself a tomb in the desert ravine in which Amenhotpe the Third was buried, but has left few other remains of his activities.

On his death in 1341 B.C., the throne was seized by the strong man of the time, a certain Horemhab, who was Commander-in-Chief of the army, and who regularized his accession by marrying Nothemmut, the daughter and heiress of Ay, and sister of Nefertiti. Gradually during his reign the remaining Aton-worshippers were denounced as 'heretics', and the late Akhnaton became the arch-enemy, spoken of simply as "that criminal". The temples of Aton were destroyed, and in the end the tomb in which he lay with his mother, Queen Tiy, was reopened, and the queen's body was removed, as though the place were contaminated. Akhnaton's name was erased, and, lying there alone and accursed, he slept through the ages, his body being discovered in modern times, still wrapped in its sheets of gold within its gilded coffin.

Since the heresy had really begun in the year 1376 B.C., when Queen Tiy had relegated her husband, Amenhotpe the Third, to the background, and had assumed the regency over Egypt, Horemhab now decreed that all the years from that date to his own accession should be expunged from the records; and thus though he actually reigned twenty-four years he was credited with a reign of fifty-nine, so as to cover the blank.

His tenure of the throne marks the period of Egypt's recovery from the disasters unwittingly brought upon the country by Akhnaton's hopeless dream. He led an Egyptian army into Syria once more, and managed to reconquer a little of the lost ground, and he

also conducted a campaign in the Sudan. Some of the many new laws enacted by him are on record ; and the remains of his many buildings at Karnak, Luxor, and elsewhere testify to his efforts to restore Egypt's former grandeur.

He caused a magnificent tomb to be made for himself in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, close to that of Tutenkhamen ; and though the ancient robbers left little in it to be discovered by modern excavators, the bas-reliefs and paintings upon the walls are still bright with colours, and show that the art of the period had nearly passed back to the traditional canons after the eccentricities of the Aton age.

When he died in 1317 B.C. he left no heir, and the great Eighteenth Dynasty came to an end.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Rameses the First, Sety the First, and Rameses the Second, of the Nineteenth Dynasty

THE main part of the Eighteenth Dynasty and early years of the Nineteenth Dynasty represent a very distinct period of Egyptian history ; and such a wealth of material has survived that the manners and customs of this age are very fully known. There are hundreds of tombs, or rather mortuary-shrines, dating from this time, on the walls of which the daily life of the dwellers upon the banks of the Nile is shown ; there are scores of temples and other ruins ; while the museums of the world have vast numbers of objects belonging to this particular epoch.

It was an age of great luxury, high artistic achievement, and general activity ; and the curiously lovable characteristics of the Egyptians which were apparent in the more simple days of old are still to be observed, unspoilt by the tremendous development of the nation's interests. The people were still kindly at heart and far more humane than their neighbours ; and though the wide extension of slave-labour had brought with it something of the cruelty and oppression always associated with this sort of servitude, it may be said that the negro and Asiatic slaves who toiled in Egypt were better off than most people in their unfortunate position.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

It was still an Egyptian's pride that he had done no man an injury ; and he believed that after death his happiness largely depended upon his ability to say truly, at the judgment of his soul, that he had not done wrong. "I did not murder ; I did not steal," his spirit had to declare ; "I did not stir up strife ; I did not cause fear ; I did not lie ; I did not covet ; I did not revile ; I did not show bad temper ; I did not gossip ; I was not an eavesdropper ; I was not proud ; I did not blaspheme ; I did not commit moral offences ; I did not refuse bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, nor clothes to the naked ; there is no sin in my body." These and many other denials of wrong-doing were made familiar to him during life so that he might be able to repeat them before the throne of Osiris, the god of the underworld ; and it is evident that in general they were not empty phrases.

Yet in spite of a pervading piety, life was gay enough, and the literature of the time is full of references to wine and song, while in many a painting we see the Egyptians feasting and making merry. Their love of nature and enjoyment of natural beauties are never more marked than at this period. In the wall-paintings we see the gardens they loved, the trees and flowers, their pet cats and dogs, their tame birds, the wild duck rising from the lakes and papyrus-swamps, the butterflies, the browsing cattle, the fishes in the water, the gazelle in the desert, and so forth.

The literature of this age has much charm, and there are, for example, many love-poems which have a delicate grace. One of these runs :

"While in my house I lie all day
In pain that will not pass away,
The neighbours come and go.

THE NINETEENTH DYNASTY

Ah, if with them my darling came
The doctors would be put to shame :
She understands my woe."

In many ways the life of the time was very sophisticated, and often one is struck by its modernity. Better-class people, for instance, slept in beds and used linen sheets and feather-pillows very similar to our own ; they sat upon cushioned chairs like ours ; and the rooms were lit by oil lamps the light of which was diffused through thin alabaster. The women rouged their cheeks, reddened their lips, darkened their eye-lashes, and dyed their hair ; the men shaved with metal razors ; and both sexes made frequent use of the manicurist and chiropodist. The children played with rag-dolls, hoops, balls, and toy figures whose limbs were made to move by pulling a string ; and at school they were taught to read and write and to do their sums, just like our own youngsters.

When people went out walking they wore gloves ; when they were hot and thirsty they sometimes drank through hollow reeds as we do through straws ; and when they returned to the house they used a very modern-looking jug and basin for washing their hands. On ceremonial occasions state-trumpeters blew a fan-fare on long silver trumpets ; at parties the guests were entertained by dancers, singers and noisy orchestras in which harps, guitars, flutes, tambourines, castanets, and drums were employed ; and for more private amusement men and women played draughts and other table-games, and gambled with dice.

These are only random instances ; but they will suffice, perhaps, to show that the Egyptians of this period were a people whose ways were not so strange as is sometimes thought. Of course, in their great wigs

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

and their elaborate robes, and with all their etiquette and ceremonial, their solemn religious rites, and their curious beliefs and superstitions they often present a picture which at first sight seems as foreign to us as is the picture of the Chinese or Japanese of a past generation ; and yet their habits are somehow very intelligible to the Western mind, and their thoughts are often found to be oddly like our own.

In 1317 B.C., upon the death of Horemhab without a son to succeed him, the throne passed to a personage named Remoses, or Rameses as the Greeks rendered it, who had been Prime Minister, and who was perhaps the late monarch's cousin or relative of some sort. As Pharaoh he was called Menpehtire Rameses, and to us he is known as Rameses the First, the founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

He was an old man, however, and he died after a reign of one year. His sepulchre in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings was not ready for him, but it was hastily finished off, and he was buried in a chamber which had been intended to be but part of the approach to the burial-hall. His queen, Sitre, survived him and was interred later in a part of the Theban desert, south of the necropolis, which had not yet been used as a burial-place, but which afterwards became famous as the cemetery of a series of queens and princes.

As Rameses had reached the age of seventy soon after his accession, the old custom of establishing a co-regency had been followed and his son had been made joint-Pharaoh with him, under the name Menmaere Sety, or Sety the First ; and now this monarch became sole Pharaoh. Within a few months he led a great army into Syria, and triumphantly carried Egyptian arms to a point considerably north of the

Lebanon. His progress was checked, however, by the Hittites, whose rising power was centred at Boghaz-Koi, east of Angora, the modern capital of Turkey ; and his clash with the southern outposts of the army of this warlike nation in northern Syria called a halt to his victorious career.

Nevertheless, he had re-established Egyptian rule in the greater part of Syria, and when he returned to Egypt there were great rejoicings, and everybody felt that the disasters of the time of Akhnaton had been wiped from memory and Egypt's imperial power restored almost to what it was in the great days of the early Eighteenth Dynasty. A grand series of pictorial reliefs and inscriptions was chiselled upon the outer walls of the great hypostyle hall of the temple of Karnak ; and here the artists of the time displayed their skill in the composition of large battle-subjects involving hundreds of figures—a kind of work which they had not before attempted.

The Pharaoh also undertook campaigns against the desert tribes on the east and west of the Delta ; but his chief claim to fame rests upon his building activities. All visitors to Egypt have seen the ruins of the temples he erected. At Abydos, the old Theni, he built the magnificent temple dedicated to Osiris and to the spirits of the early kings of Egypt who were buried in the neighbouring royal cemetery ; and the sculptures on the walls show that the art of the time was at a very high level. At Karnak he completed the great hypostyle hall begun shortly after the Aton heresy had collapsed : it is the largest pillared hall which has survived from antiquity, covering as it does an area of fifty thousand square feet, and having a hundred and thirty-four pillars, those in the middle rows being

eighty feet high and thirty-three feet in circumference. (See frontispiece.)

The well-known temple of Gurneh, at the mouth of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, was built by him as a mortuary temple where his and his father's spirit might be ministered to ; and in the Valley itself he caused a magnificent tomb to be made for himself which penetrates over three hundred feet into the heart of the rock in a series of halls, passages and stairways. It will be remembered that in the early part of the Eighteenth Dynasty the royal tombs in this Valley were made in profound secrecy, and the entrances were the roughest tunnels, easily able to be filled in and concealed ; but the portal of the tomb of King Sety is imposing, and the tunnelled entrance-passage is spacious and is decorated with sculptures. The alabaster sarcophagus in which the king was ultimately laid is now in the Soane Museum, London.

Throughout the whole country this Pharaoh restored the name of Amen wherever it had been obliterated ; and in many other ways he did all he could to raise that god to a position of absolute supremacy in Egypt. Large numbers of stone-cutters were sent to the various quarries where ornamental stone was to be obtained, so that the temples might be beautified ; and if we have been inclined to picture these men labouring under the lash in the burning sun, as the usual stories would have us believe, it will come as a pleasant surprise to read in inscriptions of the time that the greatest care was taken for the men's comfort, that each man had a daily ration of about four pounds of bread, two bundles of vegetables, and a roast of meat, and that every man was given a clean new shirt once a fortnight.

Sety the First died in about 1295 B.C., and his embalmed body, now in the Cairo Museum, is perhaps the most lifelike and impressive of all the royal mummies. The throne was at once seized by one of his younger sons, Prince Rameses, who was only sixteen years of age and, though not the heir, was the child of his father's legal queen, Tuy, herself a princess of the royal house by birth. The prince, if we may judge by his character in later life, was a pushing, energetic, self-confident, and rather vain young man, who swept his elder brothers from his path, and, with the support of some powerful group at court, proclaimed himself Pharaoh under the names Usermaere Rameses, or Rameses the Second.

In later years he stated that he had always been intended for the throne by his father, and that he had been made Commander-in-Chief of the army at the age of ten, and had been consulted upon matters of state long before he was sixteen ; but this was probably just his way of talking.

The situation in Syria at this time was extremely dangerous. The power of the Hittites had unexpectedly increased during the later years of the previous reign ; and now the Hittite monarch, King Metella, had advanced as far south as Kadesh, a city memorable in the wars of Thutmose the Third, situated on the west bank of the Orontes, less than a hundred miles north of Damascus. The Hittite army was in every way equal to that of the Egyptians ; and it looked as though nothing but a fight to the death would determine which of the two nations was to be ruler of all Syria.

Rameses accepted the challenge, and after some preliminary campaigning he set out in the spring of the

fifth year of his reign (1291 B.C.) to do battle with Metella for the Syrian sovereignty. When he came within striking distance of Kadesh he heard that the enemy was in full retreat, and he therefore hurried forward with his chariotry and the most mobile of his troops, leaving his main army to follow. Actually, however, Metella had planned to outflank the Egyptians, and having secretly crossed to the east bank of the Orontes, he was marching southwards, while Rameses was advancing northwards along the west bank.

Thus it came about that Rameses, as he approached Kadesh with his advance-guard, was suddenly cut off from his main army by a much larger force of Hittites which crossed the Orontes in his rear under the command of the Hittite king's brother, and thus got between him and the bulk of his troops. The Egyptians hardly had time to wheel about before this Hittite force was upon them ; and soon the infantry was in flight. Thus the Pharaoh and the chariotry which formed his bodyguard found themselves alone and trapped, the victorious Hittites penning them in on their new front and right, the garrison of Kadesh menacing their rear, and the river cutting them off on the left, with the Hittite king watching them from the other side.

Rameses was a tall, powerful young man of some twenty-one years of age ; and, standing alone in his gilded chariot, wearing the royal war-helmet and coat of mail, he was a conspicuous figure and the target of enemy arrows. His only possibility of escape lay in his being able to charge back along the river-side road and burst his way through the enemy ; but these light Egyptian chariots were not meant for such shock-tactics, being used mainly for skirmishing or harrying the enemy flanks with arrows shot while at full gallop.

There was only one occupant of each chariot and Rameses had to manage his own two horses ; for although in the later account of the battle he speaks of his charioteer, he states elsewhere that he was alone in the chariot, and the pictures confirm this. The reins were tied around his waist so that his hands might be free to use his weapons, which consisted of a bow-and-arrows, spears, a scimitar, and a dagger ; but he had no shield. At any moment the chariot might overturn, or the horses might fall, and jolt him out ; and he had to be ready in that case to cut himself loose from the reins with his dagger.

Nevertheless the desperate charge was made, and so impetuous and so unexpected was the onslaught of these chariots that the Egyptians burst their way right through the enemy, killing many of them, including the Hittite king's brother, and driving others into the river, where the vassal king of Aleppo was nearly drowned. Once having reached the open ground beyond, Rameses was able to rally his infantry which had fled at the first attack ; and these now fell upon the enemy while they were plundering the Egyptian dead and wounded and attending to their own.

The main Egyptian army was now coming up, and Rameses was thus encouraged to lead charge after charge back into the disorganized ranks of the enemy, and to prevent King Metella and the Hittites in reserve on the east bank of the river from coming across to the aid of their comrades. The battle finally ended without either party gaining a decisive victory. The losses on both sides, however, had been startlingly heavy ; and during the next few days some sort of truce was called, as a result of which Rameses returned at length to Egypt without having driven the Hittites

out of Kadesh and yet being able to declare that he had won a great victory.

During the next ten years he made a number of expeditions into Syria, and it is clear that the Hittites were obliged in the end to retreat and to concede the greater part of that country to the Egyptians. A few years later King Metella died, and was succeeded by his brother, Khetasar, who was confronted with so many difficulties in his own kingdom that his advisers readily induced him to make a lasting treaty of peace with the Pharaoh of Egypt. This treaty recognized a now forgotten frontier between the two countries somewhere in northern Syria ; it initiated an offensive and defensive alliance between them ; and it provided for the extradition of political fugitives, but in regard to this latter clause a promise, probably proposed by the Egyptians, was given that the Hittite or Egyptian nationals sent back to their own country were not to be punished.

Both the Egyptian and the Hittite copies of this treaty have survived, the former being dated in the twenty-first year of the Pharaoh's reign (1275 B.C.). Some thirteen years later King Khetasar paid a visit to Rameses in Egypt, and brought with him his daughter to be married to the Pharaoh. This princess was given the Egyptian name Maenofrure, and was honoured with the nominal, if not the actual, position of Queen, not merely that of a secondary wife.

It may be mentioned that this lady had an elder sister who became possessed of a devil, or, as we should now say, had a nervous breakdown ; and a miracle-working statue of the Theban god Khonsu was therefore sent to her, which cured her. But the Hittites were loath to send the statue back to Egypt and for

nearly four years it remained in this foreign land, until one night the king had a dream which so impressed him that at last he sent the figure back to Thebes, where the priests and people received it with great rejoicings.

The treaty with the Hittites was maintained throughout the whole of the long reign of Rameses, and it is clear enough that each of these two nations held the other in respect, and that neither claimed any superiority—in the other's hearing, at any rate. But as the years passed and Rameses began to have his head turned by the flattery of his court, he covered the walls of his temple-buildings with scenes representing his famous exploit and with inscriptions describing it in very exaggerated language. "His Majesty charged into the midst of the Hittites," says the official chronicle, "he being alone and no other with him. Two thousand five hundred horsed chariots of the enemy surrounded him on every side, but he slaughtered them in heaps; he killed all the princes of all the countries allied to the King of the Hittites, together with that king's own great leaders, his chariotry and his infantry. He flung them prostrate on their faces or hurled them one on top of another into the waters of the Orontes."

The tale gradually developed, and at length the Pharaoh writes in the first person: "I dashed at them like the god of war; I massacred them, slaughtering them where they stood, while one shrieked to the other, 'This is no mortal man but a mighty god; these are not the deeds of a man; never has one man thus overcome hundreds of thousands!' I slew them all; none escaped me. I shouted to my army, 'Steady, steady, my soldiers!—you see the victory won by me

alone !' I caused the field of Kadesh to be white with corpses, so that one did not know where to tread because of their multitude. I fought all alone and overcame the foreigners in their millions, hurling down with my own mighty arm hundreds of thousands in massed ranks."

In these inscriptions he called the Hittites his subjects, described them crawling to his throne with quaking limbs, and spoke of their king with contempt. One wonders what his queen, the Hittite princess, and her attendants must have thought when they read these words ; but it is to be hoped that they had not learnt to read Egyptian. Yet the country was full of Syrians and other Asiatics at this time, and the boasts of the Pharaoh must have aroused amusement or annoyance in many a foreign heart.

Egyptian domination in Syria during the early Eighteenth Dynasty had not much affected the character of the Egyptian people. The Syrians were a mere subject race, and the Pharaoh and his officers represented a ruling power having little intercourse with them beyond that necessitated by the situation. But all this was now changed. Rameses regarded Syria as a very definite part of his kingdom, and there were scores of Syrian princes and officials in attendance upon him, whose influence can be seen in the orientalizing of the court. He called his eldest and favourite daughter Bint-Anath, which is a Syrian, not an Egyptian, name ; and the significance of this will be apparent when it is remembered that she was the legal heiress of the throne. In his later years Rameses became a typical Oriental potentate, and in his huge *harâm* there were so many Eastern princesses that he must have been related by marriage to most of the



RAMESES II. NINETEENTH DYNASTY. KARNAK



AVENUE OF RAM-HEADED SPHINXES LEADING FROM KARNAK TO
THE RIVER QUAY

[To face p. 176

vassal rulers of Syria and independent kings of the countries beyond.

He was to be found in Thebes only during the winter months, and for the rest of the year he lived in the eastern Delta, close to the Syrian frontier. Here he built a new palace and city at a place which he named Per-Rameses, 'The House of Rameses', and which in the Bible is called Raamses. Another city which he built in this part of Egypt was called Per-Atum, 'The House of Atum'—Atum being a form of the Heliopolitan sun-god ; and this is spoken of in the Bible as Pithom. Both these places were founded long before the time of Rameses, at some period in the Eighteenth Dynasty, and were traditionally said to have been built in the first instance by the labour of the Israelites in the days of their oppression in Egypt ; but now the two sites were laid out anew and became centres of government. The ancient city of Zoan (Tanis), a few miles away, on the edge of Lake Menzala, was also beautified and improved, and became one of the most important cities of Egypt.

But though this eastern part of the Delta received so much attention because of the convenience of its situation in relationship to Syria, the Pharaoh's building works in other parts of the country were on such a vast scale that the modern visitor to the ruins throughout Egypt becomes tired of the very name of Rameses the Second. He made immense additions to the temples of Karnak and Luxor ; and his mortuary temple in the Theban necropolis, now called the Ramesseum, was one of the most imposing buildings in the land. Here, before the entrance, was a colossal seated figure of the Pharaoh nearly sixty feet in height, sculptured out of a single block of granite quarried

at the First Cataract, and weighing considerably over a thousand tons.

The most famous temple of this reign is that of Abu Simbel in Lower Nubia. Here the face of a cliff on the west bank of the Nile was hewn into a temple-façade, about a hundred feet wide and nearly as much in height, against which four enormous figures of the Pharaoh were seated, while a doorway in the middle led into a vast hall flanked by monstrous statues, and leading on to another hall and finally to the sanctuary. The whole temple and its statues and decorations were hewn out of the living rock in one piece, so to speak—every detail of the stupendous work, that is to say, was shaped by cutting away the solid rock, not by building on to it.

The temple was dedicated to the sun, and the plan was designed for the one hour of sunrise. When the sun comes up from behind the eastern hills across the river it strikes full into the faces of the four seated colossi ; and, penetrating through the doorway, it suddenly lights up the cavernous interior and shines right into the sanctuary. The walls of the temple are covered with scenes representing the battle of Kadesh, and, as in the temples at Thebes, we see the Pharaoh charging in his chariot through the Hittite ranks.

In the sanctuary the statue of Rameses is to be seen side by side with those of Amen of Thebes, Ptah of Memphis, and the sun-god of Heliopolis ; and throughout the temple he is shown worshipping *himself* amongst the other gods, for he regarded his mortal person as the manifestation on earth of his divine spirit, and the logical consequence of this belief was that in his aspect as a man he had to do obeisance to his aspect as a god. Every Pharaoh was divine, but Rameses was the first

Pharaoh to feel that his human personality ought naturally to bow down before his celestial self.

He reigned over Egypt for sixty-seven years, that is to say until he was some eighty-three years old, and his mummy, now in the Cairo Museum, shows him to have been at the time of his death a wrinkled old man having some white hair at the back and sides of his head, but being otherwise bald. He had bushy white eyebrows, a large hooked nose, high cheek-bones, a long upper lip, and a good set of unimpaired teeth. His tall, gaunt figure was upright to the end ; and even in death there is an expression of proud majesty upon his face.

He had hundreds of children, and during the main part of the reign the heir to the throne was one of his eldest sons, Prince Khemwas, who was famous for his wisdom and piety and became High Priest of Ptah. He died, however, before the fifty-fifth year of the reign, and another son, Merenptah, became the heir. The Pharaoh's first queen was Nofretiri (Nefertari), who was married to him at about the time of his accession, and appears to have been his sister or half-sister. She was buried in the Valley of the Queens, her tomb being close to that of Sitre, wife of Sety the First. The mother of his favourite sons, however, was Queen Istnofret, whose parentage is unknown ; and the Hittite princess, Maenofrure, also held a position of great importance, as has been said.

When Rameses the Second died he was buried in the great sepulchre which he had made for himself in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings—a sepulchre larger even than that of his father ; but it is now in such a ruinous state, partly owing to the collapse of the rock, that it cannot be visited as can most of the other tombs in this famous valley.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The End of the Nineteenth Dynasty and the Beginning of the Twentieth Dynasty

RAMESES the Second had been much too autocratic and too jealous of his authority to follow the old custom of appointing a co-regent when he attained the age of seventy ; and, indeed, the fact that his favourite son, Khemwas, had died at just about that time had perhaps relieved him of the necessity to do so. He proclaimed Merenptah as his heir, however ; and, while not sharing his throne with him, at least took him to some extent into his confidence. When Rameses died, in 1229 B.C., Merenptah was already an elderly and corpulent man of about sixty.

He was crowned under the names Bierre Hotpermae Merenptah, and seems to have legalized his accession by marrying his sister, the Princess Istnofret, the surviving heiress of the kingdom. In spite of his age he was called upon almost at once to lead an army into Syria, where his father's death had been the signal for a general revolt ; and his rapid success shows that Egyptian prestige had not really declined.

The details of the campaign are wanting, but to Biblical students the outstanding fact is that in the chronicle of the peoples conquered in Syria there appears the sentence, "Israel is laid waste : its seed is not"—the last words being the usual phrase indi-

cating a great slaughter. This is the earliest mention of Israel in history, and it shows that by now—rather over a century after the Exodus—the Jews were a recognized people living in Palestine. It used to be thought that Merenptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus ; but so late a dating for the departure of the Israelites from Egypt has now been pretty generally abandoned, and the date given by Manetho—just after the Aton heresy—seems in every way more likely.

Having quieted Syria, the Pharaoh had to turn his attention to the western side of the Delta, where the Libyan tribes for some years had been raiding the Egyptian frontier-towns, and now had made a serious military invasion of this part of Lower Egypt, aided by bands of freebooting adventurers from Sardinia, Sicily, Italy and Asia Minor. In a battle lasting six hours Merenptah inflicted a crushing defeat upon this mixed host, and chased them back into the desert. Nine thousand of the invaders were killed, and enormous booty was taken, including thousands of copper swords and over a hundred and twenty thousand weapons of different sorts. The Libyan king escaped, but several of his sons and relatives were killed, and he himself was presently dethroned by his own people, who thus put an end to the policy of aggression which had been so serious a menace to Egypt.

That the danger had been great is shown by the tremendous rejoicings which took place throughout the country when the victory was announced. "Great joy has come to Egypt," says an official inscription, "and all are discussing the victory which Merenptah has gained over the Libyans. Now we can sit down happily and talk, or walk far out upon the road, for there is no longer any fear in people's hearts. The

fortresses are left to themselves, the wells are opened again. Messengers coming to the towns walk about outside the battlements, or sit in the shade, out of the sun, until the gate-keepers wake from their siesta. The soldiers lie sleeping, and the frontier-guards go out into the fields as they wish. The cattle are left at pasture without herdsmen, and go down to drink at the stream. There is no raising of a cry in the night : ‘ Stop !—look !—someone is coming, someone is coming with the speech of a foreigner ! ’ Men sing as they come or go, and there is no lamentation as of a mourning people. The villages are settled anew, and the man who has ploughed his field shall eat of his crops.”

Merenptah reigned no more than nine years, and when he died in 1220 B.C. his sepulchre in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings was not yet ready for him ; and, in fact, the huge outer lid of the granite sarcophagus never got farther than the mid-way hall, the work of dragging it on into the burial-hall being too tedious to be undertaken after he himself was no longer there to see that it was done. The inner lid, however, sculptured in the form of a recumbent figure of a Pharaoh, is still to be seen in position ; and the visitor to the tomb to-day cannot fail to be impressed by its grandeur and dignity. The body is in the Cairo Museum, and is that of a fat, bald-headed old man of nearly seventy.

He was succeeded by his son Menmaere Amenmosis, who regularized his accession by marrying his sister Teusret ; but after a reign of about a year he died or was deposed, whereupon Queen Teusret was married to a younger brother, a cripple with one leg shorter than the other, who was crowned under the names Akhenre Merenptah Siptah. The real power, how-

ever, was in the hands of Teusret, who was supported by a great statesman named Bey, just as Queen Hetshepsut of the Eighteenth Dynasty had been supported by Senmut ; and so highly honoured was this Bey by the queen that he was allowed to make a tomb for himself in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings.

Siptah, however, died after a reign of six years, and another brother ascended the throne as Userkheperure Merenptah Sety, or Sety the Second. He, too, married Teusret, the widow of his two predecessors, whose position was so commanding that she now ignored the memory of her previous husbands, and officially dated her own reign from the death of her father Merenptah, as though she alone had been the legitimate sovereign.

She herself and her three husbands each had a tomb in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings ; but in that of this third husband of hers, Sety the Second, his name has been erased and then rewritten, which suggests that there was a moment in this reign when Teusret obtained control and repudiated him, after which she was suppressed and he regained his power. No more is heard either of her or of her adviser, Bey ; but Sety did not long survive, and he, too, disappeared after a reign of four years.

During the last part of his reign the whole country was in a state of anarchy, and when he died there ensued a period of two or three years in which the only authority was wielded by a Syrian soldier named Arisu. The story of these distracted times is best told in the words of an ancient Egyptian chronicle written a few years later : " The land of Egypt was overthrown, and every man was deprived of his rights. For many years, at first and until other times, there

was no chief spokesman, and the land of Egypt was in the hands of the elders and rulers of the cities, one killing the other, great or small. After this, other times having come, with empty years, Arisu, a certain Syrian, became the chief man amongst them. He made the whole land tributary to him ; he collected his friends together and plundered the possessions of the Egyptians, treating the gods like men, and offering no sacrifices in the temples."

Then suddenly, in 1207 B.C., a saviour arose in the person of an elderly prince named Setnakht, whose exact relationship to the royal house is unknown, but who may well have been one of the numerous sons of Rameses the Second, not much more than twenty years having elapsed since that monarch's death. He was crowned as Pharaoh under the names Userkeure Setnakht, and in his brief reign of two years he completely re-established law and order, and was the founder of the powerful Twentieth Dynasty.

"After these things," the above chronicle goes on, "when the gods had inclined themselves to peace, and to the setting of Egypt to rights according to its accustomed manner, they established their son Setnakht as king upon their great throne. He set in order the entire land which had been rebellious ; he slew the rebels who were in the country ; he cleansed the great throne of Egypt ; he made to reappear those who had been turned out, and every man knew again the brother who had been imprisoned ; and he restored the temples of the gods."

Setnakht at once began to make a tomb for himself in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings ; but after the workmen had cut the tunnel a short distance into the rock they ran into the concealed tomb of Amen-

mosis, the position of which had been forgotten in the commotion of the twelve years or so since his death. The work was therefore abandoned, and when Setnakht suddenly died he was hastily buried in the tomb of Queen Teusret, the figures and inscriptions on the walls being suitably altered. The tomb was plundered, it may be mentioned, a few generations later ; and the priests who afterwards put the place to rights seem to have found only the body of the queen, which they laid in the empty coffin of Setnakht, for there it was discovered in modern times, while the body of Setnakht himself has not been recovered.

He was succeeded by his son Usermaere Rameses, or Rameses the Third, who had already worked with him as heir to the throne, and seems to have been nearly forty years of age. The fact that his name was Rameses, and that he was born, and received that name, while Rameses the Second was still alive, indicates that he and his father were members of the royal family, Setnakht having perhaps been one of the sons of that monarch, as has been said. There is, indeed, no apparent break in the genealogy between the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties and nothing to justify the beginning of a new dynasty by Manetho except the occurrence of those years of anarchy which followed the reign of Sety the Second. In other respects things went on as usual, and Rameses the Third proved to be a characteristic successor of Rameses the Second.

But though the arts, manners and customs remained so unchanged that the expert to-day has difficulty sometimes in distinguishing the remains of the Twentieth Dynasty from those of the Nineteenth, yet in one respect there is a marked difference between the age

of Rameses the Second and that of Rameses the Third and his successors, namely in the matter of religion. Already in the time of Merenptah we find that the High-Priesthood of Amen-Re at Thebes has become an hereditary office, and that the power of the priests has increased throughout the country. The period from the last part of the reign of Rameses the Second right through to the end of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty is the great age of Egyptian religious life : it is the epoch of the priests, and it stands out as such even though in all periods of Egyptian history the service of the gods played so large a part in the lives of the Pharaohs and their subjects.

The most powerful priesthood in Egypt was that of Amen-Re, and the temple of this god at Karnak, improved and enriched by king after king, was now probably the biggest in the world. Approaching it by river the visitor at this date passed down an avenue of ram-headed sphinxes of the time of Rameses the Second, and so came to the main gateway, beyond which, on the left, was a shrine built by Sety the Second, wherein were kept the processional barques (or arks) of Amen-Re, King of the Gods, Mut, his wife and universal Mother, and Khonsu, their son, the god of the moon, these three deities forming the Theban trinity. The visitor then crossed the big, paved forecourt and so came to the huge masonry pylons which flanked the entrance to the great hypostyle hall. These pylons had been built in the time of Horemhab and finished by Rameses the First ; and, as has already been said, the vast hall beyond had been planned immediately after the collapse of the Aton heresy, and finished by Rameses the Second.

This hall was roofed over with huge blocks of stone

RAMESES III LEADING HIS SON TO
THE GODS

FIGURES ON A WALL OF THE TOMB OF PRINCESS
KHAMWAST IN THE VALLEY OF THE QUEENS
AT THEBES



STATUETTE OF IPUY, A PRIEST OF
AMEN-RE, SEEN KNEELING BEHIND AN
ALTAR ON WHICH SITS A FIGURE OF A
SACRED APE

supported on a very forest of enormous pillars, and was in perpetual semi-darkness, for the light was admitted only through grated windows high up in the side-walls. The far side of the hall was formed by the pylons, built by Amenhotpe the Third of the Eighteenth Dynasty, which had once flanked the main entrance ; and, passing on, the visitor then came to an open court wherein stood four towering obelisks of pink granite capped with copper, these having been erected by Thutmose the First.

Beyond this court were the pylons also built by Thutmose the First, beyond which was a pillared hall where stood the obelisks of Queen Hetshepsut, the lower parts walled in with masonry by Thutmose the Third in revenge for his wrongs, and the upper parts projecting through the roof. The far side of this hall was formed of another pair of pylons of the time of Thutmose the First, between which the visitor passed into another pillared hall, and thence through a great granite doorway built by Thutmose the Third. Beyond this was the granite sanctuary, with several chapels round about it.

Behind the sanctuary was a part of the temple built in the Twelfth Dynasty, and behind this again was the great festival-hall of the time of Thutmose the Third, around which were numerous chambers ; and finally there was a shrine erected by Rameses the Second. Merely to pass straight through this series of buildings the visitor had to walk a distance of more than six hundred yards ; yet this was only the main temple of Amen-Re ; and on either side of it there were other huge temples dedicated to Mut and Khonsu, with avenues of sphinxes leading to them, sacred lakes beside them, and gardens round about, dotted with

shrines, while enclosing all was a great girdle-wall pierced by magnificent gateways.

Everywhere the walls and pillars were covered with richly painted sculptures and inscriptions ; the great swinging doors were decorated with gold and burnished copper ; the sacred vessels were of gold and silver ; there were dozens of altars made of alabaster and other ornamental stone ; statues, some shining with gold, were to be seen in all directions ; and in the different forecourts were tall flagstaffs from which hung red and white streamers.

Such was the temple of Karnak, but at Luxor, a short distance away, was that other vast temple dedicated to the same trinity. The main part had been built in the Eighteenth Dynasty, but to this Rameses the Second had added a great colonnaded forecourt and huge pylons with obelisks and colossal statues in front of them ; and it will be remembered that from this temple to the temple of Karnak ran the wonderful avenue of ram-headed sphinxes laid out by Amenhotpe the Third. On the other side of the river, at the foot of the towering desert cliffs, were the many mortuary temples of the Pharaohs, in each of which Amen-Re was the presiding deity.

Down at Memphis, where the monarchs spent much of their time, stood the almost equally magnificent temple of Ptah, the Egyptian Vulcan ; and across the river was On or Heliopolis with its vast temples of the Sun. The High Priest of Ptah and the High Priest of the Sun were second only to the High Priest of Amen-Re in importance ; and in fact the Heliopolitan High Priesthood was sometimes held by the same personage who afterwards became High Priest of Amen-Re, the one office being a step to the other.

In the different cities of Egypt the priesthoods of the local gods had become all-powerful. At Abydos, for instance, Osiris and Isis were worshipped in vast and splendid temples ; at Assiout the jackal-god Wepwet, a form of Anubis, was adored ; at Bubastis in the Delta there was a great temple dedicated to the cat-goddess, Bast ; at Sais the goddess Neit had her temple and priesthood ; and so forth.

At various centres particular sacred animals had their priesthoods to minister to them. At Memphis, for instance, was the sacred bull Apis, which had its own temple and its special necropolis ; at Heliopolis was another sacred bull, Mnevis ; at Elephantine was the sacred ram ; in the Fayûm and elsewhere were the holy crocodiles ; at Esneh there was a sacred species of fish ; at Hermopolis and elsewhere there was the sacred ibis ; and at Bubastis were the famous cats.

Then there were the priesthoods of the dead Pharaohs, who ministered to them in the temples of the old pyramids near Memphis and elsewhere, or in the mortuary temples at Thebes, or in the shrines at Abydos. In every cemetery, too, there were priests whose business it was to attend to the spirit-needs of the dead.

Nearly every man of any standing held some sort of position in the priesthood or in connection with one of the temples ; and many ladies were attached to the worship of some god or other, either as actual priestesses or as singers in the choir.

Every temple had its own endowment of lands and farms, and a large part of Egypt was thus owned by the different priesthoods. Foreign prisoners brought back from the wars were put to work on these temple-lands ; and there were hosts of Egyptian officials

employed in the administration of the sacred estates. All the great priesthoods were enormously rich ; and the wealth of Amen-Re was incalculable.

Matters stood thus when Rameses the Third, himself a man of great piety, ascended the throne ; and in the following chapter we shall see how gradually the power of the High Priests of Amen-Re increased, until the Pharaohs became mere tools in their hands, and finally they took possession of the crown itself.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Twentieth Dynasty

RAMESES the Third ascended the throne in 1205 B.C., and for the first four years of his reign the work of restoring law and order, begun by his father, was carried on without any serious interruption, except for a small campaign against the Bedouin tribesmen of the eastern desert which he was obliged to undertake, and which provided him with a number of captives, all of whom were assigned as slaves to the temples of the gods.

But in the fifth year of the reign he had to meet a menace from the west as serious as that which had confronted Merenptah twenty-five years earlier. Once more the Libyans had formed an alliance with the roving peoples of the Mediterranean and had invaded the western Delta both by sea and land. Amongst the allied forces there were Sardinians, Sicilians, Greeks, and the afterwards famous Philistines who, coming originally from Crete, were already beginning to colonize the coast of Syria ; but Rameses gave them battle and completely defeated them, killing over twelve thousand of them, and taking large numbers of prisoners.

In the eighth year of the reign, however, he was obliged to lead his army into Syria to check the inroads of those same Mediterranean allies, who, having failed

to benefit by their alliance with the Libyans of North Africa, were now seeking their fortune in Asia Minor and Syria, and had already overthrown the dominion of the Hittites in northern Syria. Rameses fought them on sea and land, and inflicted such a severe defeat upon them that Egyptian power in Syria was fully re-established.

In the eleventh year the Libyans again attacked the western Delta under different leadership, and again Rameses defeated them, killing their king and over two thousand of his men. Shortly after this he was obliged to undertake another campaign in Syria to put down a revolt ; but when this was quelled he was not again troubled, and thenceforth he reigned in profound peace. Everywhere his name was feared, and his army and fleet were maintained at so high a level of efficiency that his frontiers and coasts were not menaced for many years to come, and his trading ships were able to sail to and fro between Egypt and the ports of Syria without danger.

At this time the three great priesthoods—those of Thebes, Memphis, and Heliopolis—each had its own fleet of merchantmen, maintained at its own expense ; and in these vessels the cedar-wood from the forests of the Lebanon was brought to Egypt to be used in the temple-buildings and in the making of more ships. During the reign a state-expedition was sent down the Red Sea to the land of Pount, whence the ships returned laden with incense-trees, fragrant gums, and all the other products of that distant country such as had been brought back to Egypt in the days of Queen Hetshepsut.

The great size and magnificence of the ships in use at this time is indicated by the description of the festival-barque of Amen-Re. This vessel was some

two hundred and twenty feet in length, and was made of cedar-wood partly overlaid with gold leaf; and upon the deck there was a great pavilion also coated with gold and inlaid with semi-precious stones, while the prow and stern were ornamented with rams' heads and cobras shining with gold. The great square sails of the ships were often coloured and patterned in elaborate designs; but brightly painted oars were used as well as sails, there being usually from fifteen to thirty pairs of oars.

The Pharaoh's building activities were very extensive, and there are three important temples built by him which are known to every visitor to Thebes, namely the temple of Medinet Habu, the temple at the side of the forecourt of Karnak, and the temple of Khonsu at Karnak. Medinet Habu, which was the king's mortuary temple, stands at the southern end of the Theban necropolis and is the most magnificent of all the temples of the Pharaohs in this area. At the entrance there is a gatehouse or pavilion in the form of two towers rising above the gateway, and containing several chambers the walls of which are sculptured with scenes representing Rameses in his *harim*, surrounded by his wives, some of whom sing and play to him while others waft ostrich-plume fans to and fro or carry bunches of flowers. The scenes are typically Oriental, and in fact the building itself is designed in Syrian style.

There is a great forecourt beyond, and on the far side is the main gateway between two huge pylons, giving access to the first court. On the left side of this court is a pillared portico once forming the front of the now destroyed palace which was built beside the temple. A second colonnaded court stands behind the first court, and beyond this is the hypostyle hall,

the stone roof of which was supported upon twenty-four mighty columns. Two smaller halls behind this lead on to the sanctuary, and round about are numerous shrines and chambers used by the priests.

Throughout the whole temple the walls are decorated with richly coloured sculptures representing the Pharaoh's wars and his adoration of the gods. The inscriptions tell us that the doors were decorated with electrum and burnished copper, that the altars were furnished with innumerable vessels of gold, silver and copper, that there were "monuments like mountains of alabaster" in it, and statues overlaid with gold, and that there were gardens, lakes, groves of trees, orchards, and extensive beds of flowers round about. Over sixty thousand persons were employed in the building of this temple ; but the Pharaoh is emphatic in his statement that he oppressed nobody, and that all men were happy and contented under his pious rule.

Besides the erection also of the two temples at Karnak, Rameses made vast donations to the priesthood of Amen-Re, and laid out wonderful gardens both there and in the city of Thebes itself. Extensive vineyards were established, from which the temples were supplied "with wine as plentiful as water" ; and lakes were made for the cultivation of the blue lotus-flowers which were used in such profusion on all festal occasions. "I filled these temples with male and female slaves," says the Pharaoh ; "their treasuries were overflowing with the products of every land ; the granaries mounted up to heaven ; the herds were more numerous than the sand ; there were cattle-yards for the daily sacrifices, fattening-houses containing fat geese, poultry-yards, and gardens of vines, fruit, vegetables and all kinds of flowers."

His various buildings dedicated to Amen-Re were each "like a miracle established as a thing of eternity". We read of gateways of granite, doorposts of gold, altars of hammered silver mounted in gold, vases and vase-stands of inlaid silver and gold, golden statues decorated with jewels, processional barques of gold, and shrines overlaid with gold. "I laid out august parks", the king writes, "full of flower-gardens and places for walking about, all sorts of date-groves, sacred avenues of fruit-trees brightened with the flowers of every land, olive groves, vineyards, and acres of walled gardens with great trees along all their many paths."

At Memphis and Heliopolis his work in the temples was of a similar kind; and throughout the country he made rich gifts to the local gods, built or restored their temples, and laid out their gardens.

He tells us of the filling of granaries which had become empty during the troubles at the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty; the rebuilding of temples which had fallen into ruins; the cleaning out of sacred lakes; the re-establishment of festivals and sacrifices which had been allowed to lapse; the removal of negligent officials; and the training of young priests. He speaks of the intensive working of the malachite- and copper-mines in Sinai and the gold-mines in the desert east of Lower Nubia; the digging of wells on the desert trade-routes; and the planting of trees throughout the country "so that the people may dwell in shady places".

In general he speaks of his work in the following terms: "I made the women of Egypt to go uncovered whithersoever they desired, for no strangers nor any one on the roads molested them. I made the troops to live at home in my time, and the mercenaries were

in their garrisons taking their ease on their backs, for they had no fear, nor was there any enemy from the Sudan to Syria. Their weapons were put away in the store-rooms, while they themselves were full of content and happiness, their wives being with them and their children around them. I sustained the life of the whole country—foreigners, working-people, citizens, male and female. I lifted men out of their misfortunes and gave them the breath of life ; I rescued those who were oppressed by persons of greater weight than they ; I made each man secure in his rights in his town ; I sustained those who petitioned in the courts, and re-equipped the lands that had gone to waste. I did good to the gods as well as to men, and took possession of nothing belonging to other people.”

In 1174 B.C., the thirty-second year of the reign, when Rameses must have been nearing his seventieth year, he appointed one of his sons, also named Rameses, as his heir, for it seems that he was in feeble health and knew that his days were numbered. But shortly before he died, a conspiracy was discovered in the palace, the object of which was the hastening of the Pharaoh's end and the seizing of the throne by another prince who was his son by one of his secondary wives, a lady named Tiy. A record of the trial of the conspirators has survived, and from this we learn how a group of court officials and their wives had schemed to carry out the *coup* within the palace at the same time that a revolution was started in the city.

The Pharaoh was too near death to supervise the trial, but to those whom he had commissioned as judges he gave the following written instructions : “ As for the words which the accused are said to have spoken, I know them not. Go you, and examine

them ; and when you have done so you shall cause to die by their own hand those who are worthy of death, without my knowing it. You shall punish the others who are guilty, likewise without my knowing it. See to it that you are careful not to execute punishment unjustly. And I say to you in truth, as for all that has been done and as to those who have done it, let all that they have done fall upon their own heads ; but as for me I am protected and defended for ever, for I am (already to be reckoned) amongst the dead kings who are in the presence of Amen-Re, King of the gods, and of Osiris, the ruler of Eternity."

In the course of the trial it was revealed that some of the conspirators had resorted to magic, and had made figures of wax inscribed with the names of the persons they desired to render harmless, so that they might be bewitched thereby. Magic scrolls had also been used for the purpose of giving the conspirators courage. Nearly forty persons were found guilty, including the prince whom they had proposed to put on the throne, and each took his own life, but it is not known what happened to the prince's mother, Tiy. Before the trial was over the old Pharaoh had died.

It will be recalled that his father, Setnakht, had abandoned the tomb he was making for himself because it had run into another and earlier sepulchre ; but Rameses had taken over the unfinished tomb, and, having turned the passage in another direction, had made a fine job of it, carrying the passages and halls four hundred feet into the rock. Here he was buried by his son, the new Pharaoh, Hqmaere Rameses, or Rameses the Fourth, who caused a remarkable kind of last will and testament of the dead monarch to be

prepared, which is now known as the Harris Papyrus and is in the British Museum.

This document gives detailed lists of the donations made to the temples of the gods by the late Pharaoh, and a short account of the chief events of his reign ; and Rameses the Fourth saw to it that his father should be represented as declaring again and again that he, the new Rameses, was his chosen heir. The donations were reckoned annually, and the lists are made up to the end of the thirty-first year of the reign, that being the last completed year ; but a donation for a special religious festival in the thirty-second year is mentioned, and the date of the king's death seven or eight weeks before the end of that year is given.

According to the Egyptian method of reckoning the regnal years as coinciding with the calendar years, the remaining weeks of the last year of Rameses the Third became ' Year One ' of Rameses the Fourth ; and the coronation of the new Pharaoh, after the period of mourning for his father, took place two weeks or so after the beginning of what was reckoned as the second year of his reign—to be precise, on the fifteenth day of the first month of the calendar year, which at that time was June 16th. The point is interesting because it shows that seventy-two days elapsed between the day of the old king's death and the day of the new king's coronation, thus exactly confirming the statement of later Greek writers that the period of mourning was seventy-two days.

The trial of the above-mentioned conspirators had now been finished and the guilty were dead ; and therefore Rameses the Fourth made a bid for popularity at his coronation by granting a free pardon to all the others who were under suspicion or had fled. A poem

written in celebration of the coronation reads : " O happy day ! Heaven and earth rejoice. . . . Those who had fled have returned to their homes, and those who were in hiding have again come forth. Those who were hungry are satisfied and happy, and those who were thirsty have drunk their fill. Those who were naked are clad again in fine linen, and those who were dirty have white garments. Those who were in prison have been set free, and he who was in bonds is full of joy. Those who were at strife in this land are reconciled. The rise of the Nile has begun, that it may refresh the hearts of the people." The last sentence refers to the fact that the calendar date of the coronation happened to coincide almost exactly with the traditional seasonal date of the first rise of the waters of the Nile, always reckoned as June 17th.

Less than a month later, at the hottest time of the year, the Pharaoh was impelled by what he believed to be a divine revelation to make a journey to the quarries of Wady Hammamât in the eastern desert, in order to select without delay a place in which the best of the slate-coloured stone of that district might be procured, so that quantities of it might be brought to Egypt for the making of statues of the gods.

Rameses the Fourth was already a man of about forty-five years of age, and the trying three days' journey across the scorching desert could only have been undertaken in response to some urgent call, such as the fulfilling of a vow or the obeying of an oracle's command ; but at any rate his visit resulted in the sending of a large expedition to the quarries in the following winter, in charge of the High Priest of Amen himself. This expedition, which included three or four thousand workmen and five thousand soldiers,

met with disaster perhaps from Bedouin enemies or from sickness or shortage of water, for it is recorded that nine hundred men lost their lives.

Perhaps as a consequence of the Pharaoh's obedience to the divine commands, he received an assurance from the oracle of Osiris at Abydos that he would suffer no further disaster in his reign ; and an inscription has been found, dated two years later, in which he prays to Osiris that he may be granted a long reign and may retain his eyesight, his hearing, and his capacity to enjoy life until the end. "Grant me contentment every day," he says, "and hear my voice in every prayer I say to thee, and give me what I ask with a loving heart. Give me high and plenteous Niles in my time . . . in order to sustain alive the people, and their cattle and their groves which thy hand hast made ; for thou art he who hast made all things, and thou canst not forsake them to do otherwisc with them : that would not be right. . . . Grant me a long life and a long reign, for thou art he who hast promised it with thine own mouth, and it cannot be reversed."

But the gods did not hear his prayers, and in 1168 B.C., after a reign of but six years, he died, and was buried in the large tomb he had made for himself in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings. His body shows him to have been a bald-headed man of rather over fifty years of age at his death.

The five succeeding Pharaohs—Rameses the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth—reigned altogether only fifteen or sixteen years ; and though there are numerous records of their activities, and though the first three of them had tombs in the royal Valley, they hardly call for any particular mention here, for even their relationship to one another is unknown.

But in 1153 B.C. the throne passed to Neferkeure Rameses, or Rameses the Tenth, whose reign of eighteen years is more important.

By this time the power of the priesthood of Amen-Re was so great that this Pharaoh, while still the youthful heir to the throne, was placed under the guardianship of the son of the High Priest of that god. This High Priest, whose name was Amenhotpe, had increased his influence to such a degree that in the tenth year of the reign he forced the Pharaoh to hand over to the priesthood a part of the revenue which had previously belonged to the crown ; and an obscure reference to the ' revolt of the High Priest ' indicates that there had been some trouble between him and the sovereign which was thus ended by the Pharaoh's capitulation.

In the sculptures on the walls of Karnak Amenhotpe is represented as prominently as Rameses ; and instead of the king being shown in larger size than his subjects, as was the almost invariable custom, both figures are now drawn upon the same scale. There is some reason to suppose that Amenhotpe had married the daughter and heiress of Rameses the Sixth, and hence regarded himself as almost within grasp of the throne ; but at any rate it is evident that the Pharaoh had become a mere puppet in the hands of the High Priest.

Towards the end of the reign the trial took place of a number of persons accused of breaking into the ancient tombs of the kings and stealing the gold and other treasure buried with the dead. The account of the trial has survived, and in it we read the terrible story of the devastation caused by the robbers. In reference to the pyramid-tomb of a certain king and queen of the Seventeenth Dynasty, the confession of eight of the thieves is as follows :

“ We penetrated through the masonry and mortar of the tomb, and we found the queen lying there. We opened the coffin and the coverings in which it was. Then we found the august mummy of the king. There were numerous amulets and golden ornaments at his throat ; his head had a mask of gold upon it ; and the mummy itself was overlaid with gold throughout. Its coverings were wrought with gold and silver within and without, and were inlaid with every splendid and costly stone. We stripped off the gold which we found on the august mummy of the king, and the amulets and ornaments which were at his throat, and the coverings in which it rested. We found the queen likewise, and we stripped off all that we found on her in like manner. We then set fire to the coffins, and carried away the funeral-furniture which we found with them, consisting of gold, silver, and bronze. We divided the plunder, and made the gold, amulets, ornaments, and coverings into eight parts.”

The tombs of two queens of more recent times were found to have been similarly robbed, and numerous tombs of bygone noblemen were also discovered to have been plundered. “ It was found ”, says the report, “ that the thieves had broken into all of these, that they had pulled out the occupants from their coverings and coffins and had thrown them to the ground, and that they had stolen the articles of furniture which had been given to them, together with the gold and silver and ornaments.”

Confessions were extracted from the robbers “ by beatings with a double rod upon their hands and feet ”, and they were forced to accompany the officials to the tombs which they said they had robbed. The trials lingered on for several years, and the Pharaoh had

died before they were finished ; but unfortunately the result is not known.

The new Pharaoh, Khepermaere Rameses (Rameses the Eleventh) buried his predecessor in his tomb in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings ; but he himself reigned only seven years, and, dying in 1129 B.C., was succeeded by Menmaere Rameses, or Rameses the Twelfth, the last of his line and the last Pharaoh to be buried in the famous Valley. His reign of twenty-eight years marks the final decline of the power of the royal house and rise of the power of the priesthood of Amen-Re under the energetic rule of the High Priest Hirhor, the successor and probably son of the above-mentioned Amenhotpe. As has been said, Amenhotpe's wife may have been a royal princess, and Hirhor may have been her son ; but at any rate he regarded himself practically as sovereign of Egypt, although Rameses the Twelfth nominally occupied the throne, and at Tanis in the eastern Delta a prince named Nesubenebbed had made himself a sort of vassal sovereign of that district, while Syria had almost entirely regained its independence.

The general situation is made clear in a document which has survived and which is the report of an official named Wenamon who was sent by the High Priest Hirhor to Syria to obtain cedar-wood for the construction of a new ceremonial ship for Amen-Re. Money and letters of introduction were given to Wenamon, and Hirhor entrusted to his care a particularly sacred little image of Amen-Re, known as 'Amen-of-the-Road', which had made the journey before and would be recognized as a guarantee of Wenamon's bona-fides.

At Tanis he presented his letters of introduction to Nesubenebbed, who arranged for him to sail upon a

Syrian merchantman, which was then about to weigh anchor ; but he embarked so hurriedly that he forgot to obtain back the letters to the Syrian princes which he had given Nesubenebbed to read. Moreover, as soon as he arrived at the first port of call on the Syrian coast one of the sailors, a Sicilian, decamped with all his money.

Wenamom reported the theft to the ruler of the city, saying to him : “ The money belongs to Nesubenebbed and to Hirhor, my lord, and to the other great-ones of Egypt,” but he did not even mention Rameses. He could obtain no redress, however, and at the next port he and his servants forcibly seized some money, belonging to certain Sicilian merchants, his argument being that as a Sicilian sailor had stolen his money he was entitled to get what he could from the thief’s countrymen.

Byblos was his destination, but before the ship arrived the news of this seizure of the money had been sent to the authorities overland, and Wenamom found himself detained pending the trial of his case. After many days’ delay he was taken to the palace of the Prince of Byblos, who, having heard his story, said to him : “ If what you tell me is true, where are the letters from the High Priest of Amen which should be in your hand ? ” Wenamom replied that he had given them to Nesubenebbed, whereat the prince was very angry, and said : “ Where, then, is the fine ship which Nesubenebbed would have assigned to you ? He would not have put you and your affairs in charge of a Syrian captain and crew who might have had you killed and thrown into the sea.”

“ There are indeed Egyptian ships and Egyptian crews that sail under Nesubenebbed,” Wenamom

answered, "but none chanced to be available at the time."

To this the prince replied that there were ten thousand ships sailing between Egypt and Syria, of which number there must surely have been one Egyptian vessel fit for so important a person as Wenamon represented himself to be ; and he asked him what exactly was the nature of his mission. Wenamon explained that he had come to obtain cedar-wood ; and thereupon the Prince looked up the records, and found that of late years the Egyptians who had come to obtain that wood had always paid a good price for it.

At length it was agreed that a messenger should be sent back to Egypt to find out whether Wenamon's story was true ; and in due course this messenger returned, bringing from Hirhor a present of five gold vases, five silver vases, twenty garments of fine linen, five hundred rolls of papyrus, five hundred oxhides, five hundred coils of rope, twenty measures of lentils, and five measures of dried fish. With this the prince was satisfied, and the work of felling the trees in the forests of Lebanon was begun, with the result that, eight months after Wenamon had left Tanis, the logs were all stacked on the beach ready for shipment to Egypt. But now a fleet of eleven Sicilian ships sailed into the harbour, bringing a demand for Wenamon's arrest on the charge of theft ; and to this the Prince of Byblos replied that though he could not thus arrest an envoy of Amen-Re, the Sicilians might do what they liked with him on the high seas.

Wenamon was then made to run the gauntlet ; but a storm scattered his pursuers and drove his own ship across to Cyprus, where he was made prisoner and

taken before the queen of the island. The end of the report is lost.

Rameses the Twelfth, who is seen from the above to have been a mere shadow, died in 1101 B.C. ; and the High Priest Hirhor immediately declared himself Pharaoh. At Tanis the local ruler Nesubenebbed, who had held the vassal throne since early in the reign of Rameses the Twelfth, had already assumed the titles of a Pharaoh. Thus the Twentieth Dynasty came to an end, and the crown passed from the line of the kings of the name of Rameses.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Twenty-first Dynasty

THE two Pharaohs, Nesubenebbed at Tanis and Hirhor at Thebes, must have agreed to share the kingdom, the former ruling the Delta and the latter Upper Egypt; for there is no evidence that there was any trouble between them. Manetho begins the Twenty-first Dynasty with Nesubenebbed and ignores Hirhor; yet the inscriptions make it clear enough that Hirhor was accepted in Upper Egypt as a legitimate Pharaoh, and was given the full royal titles as such. At his coronation he took the additional name Siamen, 'Son of Amen', and he also used his title "High Priest of Amen" as an actual name, writing it within a royal cartouche or oval.

Hirhor was already an elderly man, and by his various wives he had eighteen sons and nineteen daughters, all of whose names he caused to be inscribed upon the walls of the temple of Khonsu at Karnak—that temple which had been begun by Rameses the Third and was now being finished. To his eldest son, Peyenkhi, he presently assigned the office of High Priest of Amen-Re, the duties being too exacting for him, as Pharaoh, to continue to perform. Neither Hirhor's tomb nor his mummy has been found, but the mummy of his wife, Queen Nothemt, is now in the Cairo Museum, and is that of an old lady with

scanty white hair over which a large wig was worn.

Their son the High Priest Peyenkhi died before his father, and was succeeded in that office by his son, Hirhor's grandson, Peynothem ; and presently Hirhor himself died, while still Nesubenedbed was Pharaoh in Lower Egypt. Thereupon Nesubenedbed took possession of the whole country, Upper Egypt as well as Lower Egypt ; and in the end we find him carrying out restoration-works at Karnak, and we read of him as being resident at Memphis, but apparently visiting Thebes every now and then. At this time his full name was Hethkheperre Nesubenedbed, the first name, which means 'The Sun-god, Creating the White-Crown (of Upper Egypt)', being appropriate to his new sovereignty of the upper country ; and he seems now to have dated the years of his reign as from his first seizure of the vassal throne at Tanis in about the fourth year of Ramesses the Twelfth. Thus, when he died in 1080 B.C., a few years after the death of Hirhor, his reign appears to have been regarded as having lasted forty-six years, although he had been a Pharaoh only twenty-one years and Pharaoh of all Egypt only four or five years.

He was succeeded by his son (?) Oekheperre Pesebkhennu, or Pesebkhennu the First, who ruled the whole country for seventeen years, while Hirhor's grandson, Peynothem, continued to hold the position of High Priest of Amen-Re. Towards the end of the reign there seems to have been a rising in Thebes, perhaps with the object of placing Peynothem upon the throne ; but the movement was suppressed, and the ringleaders were banished to one of the oases in the western desert. The friction between the two families was then diplo-

matically ended by Peynothem, the High Priest, being married to Maekere, the daughter and heiress of Pesebkhennu, the Pharaoh, and becoming through her the heir to the throne. Thus when Pesebkhennu died in 1063 B.C., the High Priest ascended the throne under the names Kheperkhere Peynothem, and with Maekere as his queen.

The fact has already been mentioned that Rameses the Twelfth was the last Pharaoh to be buried in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, and that the tomb of Hirhor has not been found; and it seems that Nesubenedded and all the other Pharaohs of this dynasty were buried at Tanis, their ancestral city, their tombs being now lost. But this abandonment of the old royal Valley at Thebes, where practically all the kings of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Dynasties had been buried, led to a serious outbreak of tomb-robbery in the deserted necropolis. Tomb after tomb was entered by thieves; and thus we find that the authorities in this dynasty were frequently obliged to rebury the damaged mummies of their predecessors.

In the reigns of Pesebkhennu the First and Peynothem we read, for instance, of the reburial of the bodies of Kings Ahmose, Amenhotpe the First, Thutmose the Second, Sety the First, Rameses the Second, and Rameses the Third; and these are evidently only a few of the royal mummies which were found to have been pulled out of their coffins and robbed, and which were put back in their tombs or transferred elsewhere for safety.

Peynothem had a long and prosperous reign of forty years. His son, Mesaherte, held the office of High Priest of Amen-Re for some years, but died before his

father ; and his mummy, now in the Cairo Museum, shows him to have been a very fat man of middle age at his death. The High Priesthood then passed to another of Peynothem's sons, Menkheperre, who, though born in Thebes, had been living at Tanis, and in the Pharaoh's twenty-fifth year we read of this Menkheperre coming up to Thebes and taking office, while everybody rejoiced.

In order to heal old sores it was arranged that the men who had languished in banishment in the oases these many years should be pardoned ; and on New Year's Eve, which at this time fell in the late spring, Menkheperre went through the formality of asking Amen-Re's permission to recall them. The procedure in such consultations with the god was curiously childlike : his statue was carried upon a portable platform supported on the shoulders of the priests, and if an affirmative answer to the High Priest's questions had been decided upon, the priests in front bent down, thus causing the statue to appear to bow or nod its assent.

The inscription recording the consultation in question reads thus : " The majesty of Amen-Re, King of the gods, appeared in procession, and came to the great hall of the Temple of Amen, and stopped before the shrine. Then the High Priest Menkheperre went to him and praised him exceedingly, exceedingly, many times, and then addressed him, saying ' O my good lord, there is a certain matter : shall one tell it ? ' Then the great god nodded exceedingly, while the High Priest, with his hands uplifted, praised his lord who was talking as a father talks with his own son. . . . Then the High Priest said, ' Wilt thou relent towards thy servants that they may be brought back to Egypt ? ' And the great god nodded exceedingly."

There was danger that at the return of the exiles old quarrels might be renewed, and personal vendettas might result in somebody being killed ; and therefore the High Priest now said to the god, “ ‘ As for any person of whom it is reported to thee that he has killed a living man, wilt thou cause him to be put to death ? ’ Then the great god nodded exceedingly, exceedingly.”

King Peynothem was succeeded in 1023 B.C. by a Pharaoh named Usermaere Amenemopet whose relationship to him is unknown. He reigned forty-nine years, but has left few records of his activities, and it is evident that he paid little attention to Thebes, where the High Priest Menkheperre continued to hold the power for some years and ultimately transmitted it to his sons Nesubenebbed and Peynothem, who were in turn High Priest.

Amenemopet was succeeded in 974 B.C. by his son (?) Neterkheperre Siamen, who has left his name on various temple buildings at the principal capitals of Egypt—Tanis, Memphis, Heliopolis, and Thebes. It was probably this Pharaoh whose daughter was given in marriage to the Jewish King Solomon. The Bible says “ Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt, and took Pharaoh’s daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house and the house of Yahveh ” (1 Kings iii. 1). The building of the temple was finished about 967 B.C., and thus the marriage probably took place in about 970 B.C.

The above-mentioned Peynothem continued as High Priest at Thebes during most of the reign, and was succeeded in that office by his son Pesebkhennu. Meanwhile, after a reign of sixteen years Siamen was fol-

lowed on the throne in 958 B.C. by Hethhiqre Pesebkhennu (Pesebkhennu the Second); and it seems to have been during his reign that the High Priest at Thebes decided to remove all the known royal mummies from their plundered tombs, and to bury them together in a single hiding-place, so as to save them from further pillage by future thieves who might think that there were still valuables left in their tombs in the deserted royal Valley and elsewhere.

An old tomb situated near the temple of Dêr el-Bahri in the Theban necropolis was chosen for the purpose; for its entrance, at the foot of the cliffs, was well able to be concealed, and there was a pit forty feet deep at the mouth, from the bottom of which a passage more than two hundred feet long led to the burial-chamber. The temple of Dêr el-Bahri was still in use, and there were plenty of priests and guards in this area to protect the royal mummies; and, in fact, these men would know that the bodies had already been stripped of everything worth stealing.

Here, then, the bodies of the ancient kings were gradually gathered—some in their own coffins, some in coffins of other mummies which had been lost or destroyed—and were deposited in the burial-chamber and, when that was full, along the passage. The entrance-pit was not for the present filled in; and, in fact, the tomb remained easily able to be reopened until the succeeding reign, so that other endangered mummies might be brought there from time to time. Later on, however, the shaft was closed with rocks and gravel, and in the end the memory of its location was lost, and the royal dead lay undisturbed for nearly three thousand years.

The tomb was discovered in modern times, and in

it the following mummies were found, amongst others : King Seqenenre of the Seventeenth Dynasty ; Kings Ahmose, Amenhotpe the First, Thutmose the Second, and Thutmose the Third of the Eighteenth Dynasty ; Kings Sety the First and Rameses the Second of the Nineteenth Dynasty ; King Rameses the Third of the Twentieth Dynasty ; and of the Twenty-first Dynasty the High Priests Mesaherte and Peynothem, Queens Nothemt (wife of King Hirhor) and Maekere (wife of King Peynothem), and two princesses.

In regard to these mummies of the Twenty-first Dynasty a very interesting fact is to be observed. The reigning kings of this line were probably buried at Tanis in the Delta, as has been said ; and this accounts for the disappearance of their tombs and bodies, for very little except temple-ruins is ever found in Lower Egypt, where the ancient sites have passed beneath the fields. But the High Priests and some of the queens and princesses were evidently buried here at Thebes, for otherwise their bodies would not have been deposited in this common hiding-place ; yet their plundered tombs, from which the mummies were taken, have never been found.

It seems certain, then, that somewhere in the Theban necropolis or in one of the desert ravines near the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, these tombs are still concealed beneath the rocks and stones. In the case of the High Priests Mesaherte and Peynothem, and of the above-mentioned queens and princesses, whose mummies were removed to this common tomb, their sepulchres, if one day they are discovered, will probably be found to have been thoroughly robbed in ancient times ; but the tombs of King Hirhor and of the other High Priests—Peyenkhi, Menkheperre, Nesubenebbed, Peseb-

khennu, etc.—may perhaps have escaped the thieves, since their mummies do not seem to have been removed. It is possible that one day their discovery may startle the world, as did that of the tomb of Tutenkhamen.

Perhaps at some earlier date during this same dynasty other royal mummies were taken from their devastated tombs and concealed in the tomb of Amenhotpe the Second ; for when that royal sepulchre was discovered in modern times the bodies of the following Pharaohs were found in it besides that of Amenhotpe the Second himself :—Thutmose the Fourth and Amenhotpe the Third of the Eighteenth Dynasty ; Merenptah of the Nineteenth Dynasty ; and Rameses the Fourth, Rameses the Fifth, and Rameses the Sixth of the Twentieth Dynasty. This hiding-place, it would seem, had been forgotten in the days when these other bodies were taken to Dêr el-Bahri ; and by a lucky chance it was overlooked by the thieves who ransacked the royal Valley over and over again throughout the subsequent centuries.

The Twenty-first Dynasty came to an end with the death of Pesebkhennu the Second in 946 B.C. ; and it is necessary now to go back many years to trace, during the period already dealt with, the rise of the royal line of the succeeding dynasty. At about the close of the Twentieth Dynasty a certain Libyan chieftain named Maeusen, son of Buyuwawa, settled at the city of Eheninsi (Heracleopolis), on the fringe of the western desert not far south of Memphis ; and here he became so wealthy and powerful that his son, Nebneshi, and grandson, Pethut, were the most important personages in this part of Egypt. This Pethut seems to have married a lady who was the heiress of a family which came from the city of Susa, east of Babylon, for their son was

named Sheshonk, the Egyptian rendering of Shushanqu, 'a man of Shushan', or Susa, and henceforth the family names, as will be seen, were of Eastern character—Nimrod, Sargon, and Tiglath.

Sheshonk married an eminent widow, Mehetenuskhet, who is described as "mother of the King" and was probably mother of King Amenemopet. Their son, Nemroth (Nimrod), died during the reign of Siamen, and was buried with great pomp at Abydos, rich endowments being provided for the service of his spirit; but Nemroth's son, another Sheshonk, discovered that these endowments had been maladministered, in consequence of which several people were brought to trial, including the chief steward of the mortuary estates, a man named Thutmose.

This Sheshonk who instituted the prosecution was the most powerful man in the kingdom. Although, as we have just seen, he was of Libyan-Susian ancestry, his family had become almost entirely Egyptianized; and since his grandmother, the above-mentioned Mehetenuskhet, was also grandmother, presumably, of King Siamen, it would seem that he was regarded as a member of the royal family. The trial took place in the middle of the reign of Siamen, when Peynothem was High Priest of Amen-Re; and the court sat in the temple of that god at Karnak, both the Pharaoh and the High Priest being present—which shows what an influential personage this Sheshonk was.

The accused persons were the administrators, inspectors, and clerks employed by the chief steward Thutmose; and their crime was that of diverting to their own profit the produce of the estate which should have been sold to provide the sacrificial offerings, incense, and so forth, for the benefit of Nemroth's

spirit, and to maintain his tomb and its priests. Thutmose himself was deemed not guilty without trial, and in order to confirm this opinion the following procedure was adopted, according to the record which has survived :

“ The statue of the great god was brought forth on to the pavement of silver in the temple of Amen at the morning hour ; and the High Priest Peynothem came before this great god, and the great god nodded violently in salutation. Then the High Priest placed two documents before the great god, one reading : ‘ O Amen-Re, it is said that there are matters which need to be investigated in the case of the chief steward, Thutmose ’ ; and the other reading : ‘ O Amen-Re, it is said that there are no matters which should be investigated in the case of the chief steward, Thutmose. ’ And the High Priest said to this great god : ‘ O, my good lord, thou shalt judge ’ ; and the great god nodded violently. Then the great god accepted the document which said, ‘ There are no matters which should be investigated, ’ and rejected the other document. Then the High Priest went again to this great god, and put the two documents before him, and the great god accepted the same document as before.”

The minor officials, however, were found guilty, and this time it was the Pharaoh who addressed the god, asking him whether these persons were to be condemned to death ; and “ the great god nodded exceedingly ”. Then “ His Majesty bowed to the ground before him ”, and prayed that Amen-Re would prosper all the affairs of Sheshonk, to which the god signified his assent.

Sheshonk indeed prospered, and during the reign of Pesebkhennu, the last Pharaoh of the dynasty, he went to live in the city of Bubastis in the Delta, where

THE TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY

in the end his son Osarkon was married to the princess Kereme, the Pharaoh's daughter and heiress. When Pesebkhennu died Sheshonk, then a man of about fifty years of age, was supreme, and his elevation to the throne was unopposed : by ancestry, it was true, he was a foreigner, but the family had been settled in Egypt for about a hundred and fifty years, and evidently he was a great Egyptian patriot.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth Dynasties

THE founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty ascended the throne in 946 B.C. under the names Hethkheperre Sheshonk, or Sheshonk the First as he is now called ; and early in the reign the death of the High Priest of Amcn-Re, Pesebkhennu, enabled him to install his own son, Prince Iuepet, as High Priest, thus maintaining the close connection between that office and the crown which had been a point of policy throughout the previous dynasty. The Theban priesthood was still the greatest power in the land, and the temple of Karnak was still the chief centre of religious life.

The great event of the reign was the invasion of Syria and Palestine to which reference is made in the Bible, where Sheshonk is called Shishak. Putting together the two Biblical accounts of the campaign, as given in 1 Kings xiv and 2 Chronicles xii, we read : " In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak King of Egypt came up against Jerusalem with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and the people without number that came with him out of Egypt, the Lubim, the Sukkim, and the Cushim. And he took the fenced cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house

of Yahveh, and the treasures of the king's house, he took away all ; and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made."

The date of the fifth year of Rehoboam, the King of Judah who succeeded Solomon, is not quite certain, but is probably 926 B.C., that is to say, the twenty-first year of Sheshonk's reign. The Lubim are the Libyan mercenary troops which at this time always formed part of the Egyptian army ; the Sukkim are probably the tribesmen of the eastern Delta ; and the Cushim are the negro troops from the Sudan (anciently called Cush) who at all times provided the best fighting element in the Pharaoh's forces. By the word translated 'horsemen', however, cavalry is not meant, for there were no mounted Egyptian troops : the sixty thousand were more probably the infantry of the regular Egyptian army.

The details of the campaign are wanting, but when Sheshonk returned in triumph to Egypt he caused a record of his victories to be inscribed and illustrated upon the southern exterior wall of the great hypostyle hall in the temple of Karnak. Here he is shown leading in his Jewish prisoners representative of a hundred and fifty-six towns of Palestine situated between the southern frontier of Judah and northern Galilee, amongst which are many names familiar to the Biblical student, and also one name, 'Abraham's Field', which is not identified but is interesting as incorporating the earliest historical mention of the great Hebrew patriarch.

In order that these mural records might be easily visited and seen, the Pharaoh built a splendid gateway at the south side of the forecourt of the temple of Karnak, now known as the Bubastite Gate, through

which a paved road led round to them ; and the columns of the portico of this gateway still show the holes for the nails which held the sheets of gold or bronze encasing the stone. An inscription in the quarries from which the building-stone was obtained is dated at the close of the twenty-first year of the reign, and the campaign itself may have taken place as late as the spring of that same year. But the building plans which are mentioned in this inscription were not able fully to be carried out, for Sheshonk, who was nearly seventy years of age, died in the following year. His burial-place, like that of every other king of this dynasty, is unknown.

He was succeeded by his son, Sekhemkheperre Osarkon (Sargon) or Osarkon the First, who is to be compared with Rameses the Third as an outstanding patron of the temples of the gods, for he has left a list of the enormous gifts he made to the different priest-hoods during the first three or four years of his reign. These gifts consisted for the most part of gold and silver bowls and chalices, and where the weight of the metal is mentioned the figures run into millions of pounds-troy. Probably a great part of this treasure came from the despoiled temple of Solomon at Jerusalem.

Osarkon was already a man of about fifty when he came to the throne, and in the twentieth year of his reign, 906 B.C., when he was seventy, he followed the old Egyptian custom of making his son, Takeloth (Tiglath), joint-Pharaoh with him. The co-regency lasted several years, and when the old Pharaoh died in 889 B.C., at the age of eighty-seven, this son became sole monarch under the names Usermaere Takeloth (Takeloth the First), being then himself some sixty-

eight years of age. Two years later when Takeloth was seventy, he associated his son Usermaere Osarkon (Osarkon the Second) on the throne with him ; and when he, Takeloth, died in 883 B.C., Osarkon the Second, then in the middle fifties, became sole Pharaoh.

This monarch made extensive additions to the temple at Bubastis, the ruins of a pink-granite gateway unearthed there in modern times being particularly fine. An interesting inscription of this reign tells us that the temple of Luxor was flooded by the high Nile so that the place was " like a marsh " ; and the statue of Amen-Re had to be brought out in the hope that the god would moderate his bounty. This temple is often flooded at high Nile at the present day ; but the river-bed is now higher than it was, owing to the continual deposits of mud brought down from the south by the stream, and such high levels in ancient times must have been phenomenal.

In 868 B.C., when Osarkon was seventy, he associated his son Sheshonk (Sheshonk the Second) on the throne with him ; but this joint-Pharaoh died four years later, and Osarkon then made another son co-regent, under the names Hethkheperre Takeloth (Takeloth the Second). This Takeloth became sole Pharaoh on the death of his father in 857 B.C. ; but at his death in 839 B.C. he was still under seventy years of age, and had therefore not appointed a joint-king with him. Little is known about his reign beyond the facts that he carried out some building-works in the temples of Bubastis and Karnak, and in his eleventh year made his son Osarkon High Priest of Amen-Re.

Takeloth was succeeded by his grandson (?), Usermaere Sheshonk, or Sheshonk the Third, a youth of about eighteen. At Thebes Osarkon continued in his

office of High Priest for many years, and has left us the fragments of the annals of his office inscribed upon the Bubastite Gate at Karnak. From these we learn that in the fifteenth year of the reign Thebes revolted against King Sheshonk, and the High Priest was forced to seek safety in the far south ; but in the end the rebellion was crushed and the High Priest returned, and at his instigation Amen-Re pardoned the rebels.

In the fifty-second year of the reign, 788 B.C., King Sheshonk, who was then seventy, appointed his son Pemay as joint-Pharaoh with him, but in the following year, 787 B.C., both Sheshonk and Pemay died, and the throne passed to Pemay's son, Oekheperre Sheshonk, or Sheshonk the Fourth, who, after a long reign, of which we know hardly anything, died in 753 B.C., the dynasty then coming to an end.

The strong man of the time was a certain Pedubast, whose name implies that his family came from Bubastis, but who is stated by Manetho to have belonged to the city of Tanis. He now seized the throne, being crowned under the names Scheribre Pedubast ; and Manetho begins with him his Twenty-third Dynasty. He was a man of fifty-six at his accession, and in the fourteenth year of his reign, when he was seventy, he appointed as co-regent a prince named Iuepet, a name which occurs in the royal family of the previous dynasty and which therefore suggests that Pedubast had linked himself by marriage with the older royal house. This joint-Pharaoh, however, did not live long, and is not mentioned again.

It is said that in 749 B.C. (shortly after the seventh Olympiad, according to Greek reckoning) some Ionian Greek merchants from Miletus in Asia Minor established a trading-station in the western Delta—which is

interesting as giving the earliest dated event in the long relationship between Greece and Egypt. But Egyptian attention was soon to be focused upon the East. In 734-732 B.C. the Assyrians under King Tiglath-Pileser the Third carried fire and sword through Syria and Palestine ; and the Egyptians must already have realized that one day they would have to fight for their life with this aggressive nation. For the moment, however, the uninhabited desert between Palestine and Egypt, which had once been the busy pathway to their Asiatic dominions, was their silent safeguard.

Pedubast died in 731 B.C. and was succeeded by Oekheperre Osarkon, or Osarkon the Third, who was perhaps the son of the above-mentioned Iuepet. At the close of the reign of Pedubast the High Priest of Amen-Re at Thebes had been a certain Takeloth, who may well have been a brother of this Osarkon the Third, and during the new reign three of the Pharaoh's sons successively held this office, which shows that Osarkon was in full control at Thebes. In the north, however, the whole country gradually broke away, and in various cities the local princes set themselves up as independent sovereigns, so that by the ninth or tenth year of the reign (723-722 B.C.) there were as many kings in Egypt as there had been in the days after the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty.

An invasion of Upper Egypt by one or more of them now seemed so imminent that at last the priesthood of Amen-Re decided to invite the King of Ethiopia to come to their aid. This monarch, whose name was Usermaere Pienkhy, ruled a great negro kingdom the capital of which was Napata, near the Fourth Cataract, about six hundred and fifty miles up the Nile from the First Cataract and nearly eight hundred miles south

of Thebes ; but it is not necessary to suppose that he himself was a pure negro. He may have been the descendant of some Egyptian prince or Viceroy of Ethiopia of the days when the Sudan was still a province of Egypt ; and certainly in his court, government, and religion he copied as exactly as possible the institutions of the Pharaohs at Thebes, and he and his nobles spoke the Egyptian tongue.

He called himself ' Reed-king ' and ' Hornet-king ' and ' Son of the Sun ', just as every Pharaoh did, and he wore the White Crown of Upper Egypt and the Red Crown of Lower Egypt. He worshipped the Theban trinity, and Amen-Re was the King of the gods. Temples, copied from those in Egypt, adorned his cities ; and the scenes and inscriptions upon their walls were similar to those at Karnak and Luxor.

King Pienkhy was as cultured as any Egyptian, and the army which he commanded was very much like the army of a Pharaoh of the best period, since the latter had always consisted largely of negro troops. The gold-mines of the south-eastern desert provided him with great wealth, and trade with Egypt supplied him with all the luxuries of Egyptian life. The events about to be related were recorded by him in an official inscription set up at Napata, written in the best literary style ; and in fact it is one of the most lively pieces of writing which has come down to us in the ancient Egyptian language.

When, after a reign of some twenty years, he was invited to intervene in Egyptian affairs it is evident that he seized with joy the opportunity, not only of increasing his dominions, but of acting as saviour of Thebes which was to him the holy city of his national god, Amen-Re. The fate of the reigning Pharaoh,

Osarkon the Third, did not much interest him ; but the protection of Thebes and of the sacred temples and priesthood of Amen-Re from the violence of the upstart kings of Lower Egypt seemed to him to be a religious duty.

His record of events begins with the arrival at Napata of despatches from Egypt, probably about the year 722 B.C., the tenth year of the reign of Osarkon the Third. These despatches informed him that a certain Tefnakhte, who had made himself King of Sais in the western Delta, was advancing southward, and was besieging Hcracleopolis, the original home of the royal family of the Twenty-second Dynasty ; but when Pienkhy heard the news he tells us that he merely laughed.

Shortly afterwards, however, an embassy arrived from the princes and military officers of Thebes, informing him that Tefnakhte's conquests had now extended some two hundred miles up the Nile from Memphis, and that he had been joined by Nemroth, King of Hermopolis, the modern Eshmunên ; and at this Pienkhy sent a message to the commanders of the troops in Thebes telling them to declare martial law, to mobilize every man they could enlist, and to hold the line until his Ethiopian army should arrive.

This army was despatched as quickly as possible, and addressing its officers on their departure, he said : " Do not delay either by day or night, as though this were a game of chess, but fight on sight. Force battle on the enemy from afar . . . for you know that it is Amen who has sent you forth. When you arrive at Thebes, before Karnak, baptize yourselves in the sacred river, put on clean clothes, and unstring your bows. Do not then boast of your strength, for there

is no strength to the mighty except in Amen who turneth the weak into the strong. Sprinkle yourselves with holy water at his altars, and bow to the ground before him, saying, ‘ Show us the way, that we may fight in the shadow of thy sword.’ ”

The Ethiopian army descended the Nile in a great fleet of river-boats, and after receiving the blessing of Amen at Thebes, proceeded down-stream, and presently encountered and defeated the ships of Tefnakhte which were sailing up-stream towards Thebes. They then pushed on to Heracleopolis, where they found Tefnakhte at the head of an alliance including King Nemroth of Hermopolis, King Iuepet whose realm is uncertain, King Osarkon of Bubastis, evidently some relation of Osarkon the Third, Prince Sheshonk of Busiris in the middle Delta, Prince Theamenefenkh of Mendes in the western Delta, and many others.

A battle on river and land ensued, and the northern confederates were defeated, Tefnakhte and his allies retiring to the Delta, with the exception of Nemroth who fled back to his own city of Hermopolis. When the news of this battle reached Pienkhy in Napata he was angry that his army had not followed up the victory by invading the Delta, and, although he was an old man, he at once decided to come himself to Egypt. “ As my father Amen loves me,” he cried, “ I will go myself to Egypt ; I will make the Delta taste the taste of my fingers ! ”

When Pienkhy arrived before Hermopolis he “ came forth from the cabin of his ship, mounted his war-chariot, and, raging at his soldiers like a panther, said : ‘ Is it your duty as soldiers to be slack in my affairs ? A great and final blow must be struck at the enemy.’ ”

Therewith he laid close siege to Hermopolis, and in

a few weeks "the city was foul to the nose, and deputations from it threw themselves on their faces before the king, pleading with him, and bringing him presents of gold, precious stones, chests of clothing, and even the diadem from Nemroth's head. Then they sent Nemroth's wife and his daughter to plead," and at last Pienkhy consented to an armistice, and, addressing Nemroth himself, said to him : "Who has led you astray?—who has led you astray?—who, then, has led you astray that you risked your life by opposing me? I desire no more than that the people of Upper Egypt should bow to me, and that the people of Lower Egypt should accept my protection."

Nemroth then surrendered and was pardoned, all his treasure being handed over to the temple of Karnak, after which Pienkhy entered the city and held a great religious service in the temple of the local god, Thoth. When he went to Nemroth's palace he turned his face away from the ladies of the *harim*, and asked to be shown the stables, the horses being of more interest to him. "But when he saw that the horses had suffered from hunger, he said, 'I swear as God loves me, it grieves me more that these horses have been starved than any other mischief that you, Nemroth, have done!'"

He then proceeded to Illahûn, the old centre of the Twelfth-Dynasty Pharaohs, which had shut its gates against him ; and "he sent a message to the garrison, which said : 'You suicidal, silly, and miserable creatures ! If an hour passes without your opening your gates to me, you are dead men—and that would be painful to me!'" Thereupon the city surrendered, and not a man was killed ; but the treasure was confiscated and given to the temple of Karnak.

Proceeding to Meidûm, which was also held by the enemy, he sent in a message, saying : " There are two ways before you : choose as you like. Open your gates, and you shall live ; close them, and you shall die." The garrison surrendered, and the treasure of the city was likewise sent to Karnak.

At length Pienkhy arrived before Memphis where Tefnakhte himself was in command ; but that personage fled by night under the pretext of obtaining help. The garrison, however, resisted, and the city was taken by assault, a terrible slaughter ensuing. The Ethiopian king then attended divine service in the temple of Ptah, reinstated the priests, cleansed the city of the stains of war, and assigned the treasure equally to the local gods and to Amen-Re at Karnak. After this King Iuepet and some other princes surrendered ; and presently Pienkhy went across to Heliopolis, where he washed in the holy pool, bathed his face in the sacred stream, performed the customary sacrifices to the sun, and finally went alone into the Holy of Holies.

King Osarkon of Bubastis and various princes then made their submission ; and after this Pienkhy proceeded to Athribis, a short distance from the apex of the Delta, where the ruling prince surrendered and handed over all his treasure, inviting Pienkhy to visit his stables and to take all the horses he desired. A few days later he received a letter from the wretched Tefnakhte, saying : " I can stand up to you no longer. . . . I am a very miserable man, and fear is in my bones. I have not been able to sit in a beer-hall, nor has music been played to me. I have gone hungry and thirsty ; my bones ache ; my head is bare ; and my clothing is in rags."

Pienkhy pardoned him, after which the remaining

kings and princes came in, all being allowed to make their submission to the conqueror in person, except two or three of them who had been eating fish, which Pienkhy considered to be an abomination. The Ethiopian army then sailed up the river to Thebes, and presently Pienkhy bade farewell to Egypt while crowds of people cheered him and heaped blessings upon him. Osarkon the Third was left upon the Egyptian throne ; but Pienkhy's grandson, Shebeke, was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army. This Shebeke made an attempt to invade Palestine in 720 B.C., but was sharply defeated by Sargon, King of Assyria, in whose chronicles he is called " Sibe, the Commander-in-Chief of Egypt "

Osarkon the Third died in 718 B.C. after a reign of fourteen years ; and as he has left inscriptions at Karnak recording work carried out there in his fifth, eighth, tenth, and fourteenth years, it is clear that though he seems to have been ignored by Pienkhy, his nominal rule suffered no interruption. He had no power, however, and at his death the throne was seized by the son of Tefnakhte who had died meanwhile.

The new monarch, whose name was Wakhere Bekenranef, is reckoned by Manetho as the sole Pharaoh of the Twenty-fourth Dynasty and is stated by Greek writers to have been a law-giver of great wisdom whose judgments were models of sagacity ; but though he ruled over northern Egypt for six years, he was never recognized at Thebes. During this period the Ethiopian prince Shebeke appears to have been recalled to Napata owing to the death of his aged grandfather Pienkhy and his father Keshto ; but returning to Egypt in 714 B.C., and finding Tefnakhte's son reigning as king, he decided that the time had come to declare

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

himself Pharaoh and to unite Egypt and Ethiopia in one great kingdom.

He made short work of Bekenranef, and having received the submission of the whole country, established himself upon the throne at Thebes in 713 B.C. under the names Neferkere Shebeke, and thus founded the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties

THE position of affairs in 713 B.C. when Shebeke ascended the throne was a happy one only so far as Upper Egypt was concerned. The Ethiopians were fervent worshippers of Amen, and, as has been said, their capital, Napata, was second only to Thebes as a centre of the Amen-religion. The great Ethiopian conqueror Pienkhy had poured into the coffers of Karnak the wealth confiscated from the local kings and princes of the north, and Shebeke, too, was piously eager to do honour to the great Theban god in his ancient sanctuary of Karnak and to add to the riches of the temples there, already gleaming with the gold and silver presented by Pharaoh after Pharaoh and with the treasures stripped from Solomon's temple at Jerusalem by Sheshonk (Shishak) two hundred years earlier.

To the Thebans Shebeke was no stranger, no mere negro potentate from the Sudan who had conquered them. He was a faithful son of Amen, who had come back home to Thebes, as it were, bringing Ethiopia with him, so that the position was much as it had been in the great days of old when Egyptian rule had extended up to the Fourth Cataract and beyond. He was probably descended from Egyptian ancestors, and was to all intents and purposes an Egyptian, although,

like many Egyptians of Upper Egypt, he had a large admixture of negro blood in his veins. Egypt had for so long used negro soldiers in the army that Shebeke's dusky troops and court officials were no novelty ; and, indeed, in all the great Egyptian cities south of Thebes—Elephantine at the First Cataract, for example—there had always been intermarriage between Egyptians and the darker races from farther up the Nile.

The Upper Egyptians, in fact, and especially the Thebans, must have felt that they were once more the dominant race in Egypt ; but the point of view of Memphis and the Delta was very different. The northern Egyptians were much lighter in colour, and, as at the present day, many of them were practically white. There was a good deal of Asiatic and Mediterranean blood in their veins ; and the various princely houses suppressed by Pienkhy and Shebeke regarded themselves as superior to the southerners in all but fighting strength.

They were restless under Ethiopian and Upper Egyptian domination, and yet they must have realized that the menace of an Assyrian invasion of the Delta was greatly lessened by the presence of Shebeke's combined Egyptian and Ethiopian army. They had heard of the havoc wrought in Syria and Palestine by the Assyrian invaders, and they knew that a like fate would be theirs were it not for the protection afforded by the south. Still they revered the memory of Bekenranef and his father Tefnakhte, and they would have greatly preferred a northern Egyptian Pharaoh ; yet even amongst themselves, throughout the Delta, there were feuds between one local princely house and another, and only dread of Assyria and respect for

the solid strength of Shebeke's government kept them from flying at each other's throats.

The statesman-prophet Isaiah, closely watching international affairs from Jerusalem, realized the restlessness in Lower Egypt when he wrote, "I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians, saith the Lord, and they shall fight every one against his brother, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. . . . Surely the princes of Zoan (Tanis) are become fools ; and the princes of Noph (Napata ?) are deceived. . . . The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit " (Isaiah xx.).

Shebeke's reign was marked by extensive building operations, particularly in the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Medinet Habu at Thebes ; and his sister-wife, Amenirdes, who was ' Divine Consort '—a sort of High Priestess—of Amen, also erected temples there in her own name. Shebeke, according to later tradition, was a man of great piety, and was so merciful that he usually refused to impose the death-penalty upon evildoers. After his subjection of the north he showed no inclination for war ; and when, in 701 B.C., it was decided to send an expedition to Palestine to check the activities of the Assyrians, he did not lead it himself, but entrusted the command to his nephew Taharqa, who had come to Egypt in 714 B.C. as a young man of twenty.

Taharqa is called in the Bible ' Tirhakah King of Ethiopia ' (2 Kings xix. 9), although he was not yet king ; and the Assyrians warned the Jews not to rely on ' Pharaoh King of Egypt ', for he was a ' bruised reed ' (2 Kings xviii. 21)—a term which probably had

reference to the Egyptian royal title 'Reed-King', written with a sign representing a bending reed. And so it proved, for Taharqa was defeated, and had to return to Egypt without having accomplished anything.

Shebeke died in 701 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Dedkeure Shebetoke, whose reign was quiet, and who died in 689 B.C., leaving the throne to his cousin, the above-mentioned Taharqa, who was crowned under the names Nefertumkhure Taharqa. He was now some forty-five years of age, and having been in Egypt continuously since he was twenty he was entirely Egyptianized, although, as his portraits show, his features were decidedly negroid. One of his first acts was to send for his mother to come from Napata to visit him at Tanis in the eastern Delta where he was staying ; and he describes the incident thus : " I had been separated from her as a youth of twenty years of age, for I had accompanied his Majesty (King Shebeke) when he invaded the Delta. Thus, when she came down to Tanis, where I was, after all these years, and found me crowned as Pharaoh, she rejoiced greatly ; and the people bowed to the ground to my mother."

For the first fifteen years of his reign Taharqa ruled in peace, and carried out important building-works at Tanis, Memphis, Thebes and elsewhere. At Karnak he erected an avenue of splendid columns leading across the forecourt to the gateway of the hypostyle hall ; and south of the main temple he built a shrine dedicated to Ptah and Osiris. Meanwhile at Napata he caused a sanctuary to be hewn out of the cliffs, somewhat in the style of the rock-temple of Rameses the Second at Abu Simbel ; and it seems that he sometimes visited his Ethiopian dominions.

In 674 B.C., in the sixteenth year of the reign, the King of Assyria, Esarhaddon, began the series of attacks upon Egypt which were ultimately to lead to the collapse of the Ethiopian dynasty. At first Taharqa and his Egypto-Ethiopians were victorious, and the invaders were driven back from the frontiers of the eastern Delta ; but in 670 B.C. a second invasion was successful, Taharqa was defeated and retired to Upper Egypt, and Memphis was captured. Esarhaddon realized that the only way to hold the conquered country was to divide it up into small kingdoms such as those which had existed at the time of Pienkhy's invasion ; and he therefore created twenty separate states each ruled by the native prince of the locality.

Over Sais and Memphis he placed Prince Neko, who seems to have been the great-grandson of Tefnakhte, Pienkhy's enemy, and grandson of Bekenranef, the Pharaoh whose reign constituted Manetho's Twenty-fourth Dynasty ; at Busiris he reinstated Sheshonk who had been dethroned by Pienkhy ; at Tanis he set up a prince named Pedubast ; at Mendes he enthroned Prince Pemap, perhaps the son of the ruler of that city who had surrendered to Pienkhy ; and so forth. But as soon as the Assyrians had marched away these princes formed an alliance with Taharqa in Upper Egypt, preferring his rule to that of Esarhaddon.

This alliance brought the Assyrians back in 668 B.C., now under a general of Ashurbanipal, the successor of Esarhaddon ; and once more Taharqa was defeated. This time the invaders pursued him up the Nile, and captured Thebes, which doubtless they sacked, though the damage done does not appear to have been very great. The Assyrians then returned to Lower Egypt where garrisons were placed in the chief cities ; but

presently Neko of Sais and two or three other princes began again to negotiate with Taharqa who had established himself once more at Thebes. Their hopes of ridding themselves thus of the Assyrians, however, came to naught : Neko and his friends were arrested and sent in fetters to Nineveh, the Assyrian capital.

Neko, nevertheless, managed to obtain pardon, and Ashurbanipal allowed him to return to Sais and to rule there as an Assyrian vassal. Thebes and all the southern part of Upper Egypt remained loyal to Taharqa, and the Assyrians made no attempt to interfere with him there. In 665 B.C., when he was seventy, he retired to Napata and associated a middle-aged son of the late Shebeke upon the throne with him under the names Bekere Tontamen ; and presently this Tontamen went to reside at Thebes, while Taharqa remained at Napata, dying there in 663 B.C.

Meanwhile, ever since the Assyrians had invaded Upper Egypt in 668 B.C., and had retired again, a great Egyptian patriot named Mentuemhet had governed Thebes in the name of Taharqa ; and in an inscription found at Karnak he records the work he did to repair the damage caused by the invaders. " I purified all the temples, according as one should purify violated temples after an invasion of unclean foreigners," he writes ; and he speaks of the catastrophe as having been " a divine punishment ". He was ever looking for ways of restoring the dignity of the temples, he says, and he " spent the day in searching and the night in seeking ".

He constructed a new ceremonial barque and new shrines and statues for Amen ; he rebuilt the temple of Mut at Karnak and cleaned out her sacred lake ; he repaired the broken statue of Khonsu ; and he

renewed the shrines of other gods in Thebes. At Koptos, north of Thebes, he repaired the damaged statue of the local god Min ; at Abydos, where he has left a record of his visit, he restored the temple and built a sacred barque for Osiris ; and for himself he made a magnificent tomb in the Theban necropolis.

All his work, however, was swept away in the disaster which ensued. Tontamen was crowned as Pharaoh both at Napata and at Thebes, and immediately set out for the north in an attempt to regain the whole country. Neko remained loyal to Ashurbanipal and was killed in the fighting ; Memphis was captured by Tontamen's men ; and soon the whole Delta renounced its Assyrian allegiance and came over to him. Thereupon, in 661 B.C., a great Assyrian army marched into Egypt, defeated Tontamen, followed him to Upper Egypt, and chased him over the southern frontier into Ethiopia, whence he never returned. Thebes was sacked again, and left in ruins.

The fall of the great city of Amen echoed through the world, and in the Bible we read of it in the Book of Nahum (iii. 8). "Populous No," the prophet calls it, for Thebes was spoken of as *No*, 'The City', "that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the flood, and her wall was from the flood. Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite. . . . Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity : her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all her streets ; and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."

Ashurbanipal rewarded the loyalty of the late Neko by declaring his son, Psametek, Pharaoh of Egypt ; and with him began the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. He

was crowned under the names Wahibre Psametek, and is now known as Psametek the First ; but as his father had been killed two years previously, he dated his accession from that event, and this year 661 B.C. was reckoned as the third year of his reign.

Psametek's ancestral city of Sais now became the capital of Egypt. It stood in the fields of the north-western Delta on the right bank of the Canopic branch of the Nile, not far from the modern Kafr az-Zayyât ; and as it was one of the very oldest cities in Egypt, and the centre of the worship of the goddess Neih, it was at this time full of venerable buildings, the temple of the patron goddess being of great size and splendour.

The first years of the reign seem to have been troubled by opposition from two quarters : on the one hand, the southern part of Upper Egypt, which was still controlled by Mentuemhet, was loyal to the Ethiopian dynasty ; and on the other hand, there were various princes of Lower Egypt who were more loyal to Assyria than was Psametek, he himself being prepared to throw off his allegiance as soon as an opportunity presented itself. These troubles obliged him at one time to fly for his life to the marshes near Buto ; and there, so tradition says, he was told by an oracle that " men of bronze " would one day come from across the sea and that by their aid he would regain his throne.

Shortly after this a large body of Ionian Greek and Carian mercenary soldiers came over to Egypt from Asia Minor seeking employment, and Psametek, realizing that these heavily armed troops were the " men of bronze " referred to by the oracle, promptly engaged their services. King Gyges of Lydia also



HARPOCRATES

ANUBIS

ISIS

SEKHMET

HORUS



HORUS

NEITH

BES

STATUETTES OF THE GODS. IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM; ALL DATE FROM BETWEEN THE TWENTY-SIXTH AND THIRTIETH DYNASTIES

[To face p. 238

sent some soldiers to Egypt to help Psametek to revolt against Assyria ; for Lydia was being menaced by the same enemy. In 652 B.C., however, King Ashurbanipal found himself involved in a dynastic war of his own, and Psametek was thus able to make himself independent of Assyria without a fight, and with the aid of these mercenaries he was soon established firmly upon the throne of a free Egypt.

Meanwhile, he had reconciled Thebes to his rule by a clever stroke of policy. Queen Shepenupt, the widow of the late Ethiopian Pharaoh Taharqa, was still living at Karnak, where she held the position of ' Divine Consort of Amen ', an office which was more or less that of High Priestess ; but she must have been an old woman by now, and Psametek was able to persuade her to adopt his own daughter, Princess Nitokri, as her heiress and successor, and to hand over to her the main part of the revenues she received.

Nitokri, who must have been still in her 'teens, was sent up to Thebes with a grand retinue of courtiers, military officers and priests ; and there a palace was assigned to her to which she was conveyed in a gold and silver palanquin. Thus the loyalty of the priesthood of Amen-Re was secured ; and in the years to come Psametek did what he could to repair the damage done to Thebes and its temples by the Assyrians. Yet Thebes never recovered its former importance, and Karnak, stripped of its riches, became a quiet and venerable holy-place rather than the wealthy and busy centre of the state-religion.

Psametek's main interests were directed towards the Greek world which in these days was gradually rising into importance. In Athens, Corinth, Sparta, the Aegean islands, the city-states of the west coast of

Asia Minor, and elsewhere, Greek civilization was taking shape ; and it was the Pharaoh's policy to cultivate trade-relations and general friendship with these people rather than with the Orient. His army of Greek mercenaries became an established institution ; but in order to prevent any clash between them and the Egyptian troops he confined them to two areas, one in the eastern Delta, and the other close to his capital, Sais.

Any invading army from Assyria would have to approach Egypt from across the desert east of what is now the Suez Canal ; and the main Greek force was therefore placed at Daphnae, the modern Defneh, on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, some ten miles west of the modern Kantara and not far from present-day Port Said. Here a strong fortress was erected the ruins of which still survive ; and this was the centre of a great Greek military camp. The rest of the Greek troops were placed at Naukratis, twelve miles south-west of Sais, and not far south of the present Damanhûr ; and here, too, a fortress and military camp were established.

Trade with the Greek cities was brisk, and whenever these Greek mercenary soldiers returned home they carried across the Mediterranean wonderful tales of the prosperity of Egypt and spread the knowledge of its arts, crafts, and religion, so that soon Greek travellers began to visit the Delta and Greek students attended its universities. Psametek was called by them Psammetichos, and so greatly was he respected that the name passed into usage in Greece, an instance of which is provided by the ruling house of Corinth, where the nephew of the famous Periander was named Psammetichos. Many Egyptians began to learn to speak

Greek ; and the Greeks on their part studied Egyptian philosophy, religious thought, painting, sculpture, architecture and music.

Psametek was a keen commercial man ; and, indeed, his portraits show him to have been in later life a shrewd and business-like personage, with a long nose, a canny eye, and a plump and prosperous appearance about the cheeks and chin. During his long reign of fifty-four years Egyptian prosperity increased by leaps and bounds ; and perhaps under the influence of Greek admiration for the antiquity of his people's history and customs, he encouraged throughout the country a revival of the old arts, crafts and customs. There was a general return to the canons of ancient times, and in sculpture, painting, and architecture the best models of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties were copied. Indeed, the renaissance was so wide in its scope that archaic forms were revived in the writing, old words were brought back into use, ancient titles were reintroduced, and almost forgotten religious liturgies were heard again in the temple-services.

Psametek died in 609 B.C., and was succeeded by his son, Wahemibre Neko, who at once led his Greek and Egyptian troops into Syria in the hope of recovering control of that country, since Babylon and Media had formed an alliance against Assyria, and the situation might be turned to good account. At this time Josiah was king in Jerusalem, and, being faithful to his allegiance to Assyria, attempted to bar Neko's way ; but the Pharaoh, as the Bible tells us (2 Kings xxiii. 29 ; 2 Chronicles xxv. 20), "sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou King of Judah ?—I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war (Assyria).

Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not."

Josiah, however, attacked the Egyptians at Megiddo, where Thutmose the Third of the Eighteenth Dynasty had won his great victory nearly nine hundred years before this time ; and in the battle he, Josiah, was killed. The Jews thereupon made Jehoahaz king, but Neko dethroned him and sent him to Egypt as a prisoner, where he died.

In this campaign the Egyptians pushed on northwards as far as the Euphrates, which had been the limit of their power even in their greatest days ; and on his return to Egypt the Pharaoh dedicated his armour to Apollo in his famous temple at Branchidae in Asia Minor, in recognition of all that he owed to his Ionian Greek mercenaries.

Four years later, in 605 B.C., he again advanced to the Euphrates, but was there defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and had to lead his army back to Egypt. His withdrawal is derided by Jeremiah, the prophet (Jeremiah xlv.) : "O daughter of Egypt, in vain shalt thou use many medicines, for thou shalt not be cured. The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land : for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, and they are fallen both together. . . . Pharaoh King of Egypt is but a noise ; he hath passed the time appointed . . . Egypt is like a very fair heifer, but destruction cometh ; it cometh out of the north. Also her hired men (the Greeks) are in the midst of her like fatted bullocks ; for they also are turned back, and are fled away together : they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, and the time of their visitation."

Thereafter (2 Kings xxiv. 7) "the King of Egypt came not again any more out of his land, for the King of Babylon had taken all that pertained to the King of Egypt." Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar, and between 598 and 596 B.C. the leading Jews were carried away in captivity to Babylon. Egypt, however, was not molested ; and Neko was able to devote the rest of his reign to the promotion of Egyptian prosperity. He made an unsuccessful attempt to open a canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea—the forerunner of the present Suez Canal ; and he sent out an expedition to circumnavigate Africa, an undertaking which was successfully accomplished in three years, the ships having set out from a port in the Red Sea and having returned through the Straits of Gibraltar, thus completing a journey of over eight thousand miles.

In 594 B.C. Neko was succeeded by his son, Neferibre Psametek, or Psametek the Second, who gave Syria a wide berth, but conducted a successful war against Ethiopia, a record of which was left by his Greek soldiers in a Greek inscription at Abu Simbel, not far below the Second Cataract.

After a short reign he was followed in 588 B.C. by his son Wahibre Hoibre, whose name is rendered as Hophra in the Bible and as Apries by the Greeks. In 586 B.C. he was invited by Zedekiah, King of Judah, to bring his army into Syria to oppose Nebuchadnezzar ; and this he did, but without any success. Both sides employed Greek mercenary troops, but the Babylonian army was much larger than the Egyptian, and when the Pharaoh had retired before it, Jerusalem was captured and sacked. The prophet Jeremiah, together with two or three princesses of the royal house of Judah and several nobles, made their way to Egypt, and took

refuge with the Greek troops in the fortress of Daphnae, a name rendered in the Bible as Tahpanhes.

In 569 B.C. Hoibre was invited by the Libyans of the western desert to help them against the Dorian Greeks whose colony at Cyrene on the North African sea-coast was dispossessing them of some of their lands ; but the Egyptian troops which the Pharaoh despatched were ambushed and annihilated by the colonists, and the story spread in Egypt that Hoibre had sent them to their doom so as to be rid of the political power of certain Egyptian officers.

A great rebellion ensued, and at this Hoibre sent one of his native generals to treat with the rebels. This man, whose name was Ahmose, had risen from the ranks, and was notorious for his heavy drinking and for his vulgar ways ; but he was very popular with the army, and when the rebels offered to make him Pharaoh, he threw in his lot with them. In the fight which ensued the Greek mercenaries employed by Hoibre were defeated by the Egyptians, Hoibre was made prisoner, and Ahmose was crowned as Pharaoh, under the names Khnumibre Ahmose, the latter name being rendered by the Greeks as Amasis. Two years later, however, Hoibre escaped and made an attempt to regain his throne ; but he was defeated, and was murdered aboard a boat on which he was attempting to get away.

The long reign of Ahmose was a period of great prosperity in Egypt, and traces of his extensive building operations have been found from end to end of the country, particularly at Sais, Memphis, and Abydos. The Egyptian renaissance was now at its height, and in the arts and crafts we can see how closely the standards of the classical age were copied. The revival of

the rather arrogant old national spirit, however, led to considerable trouble with the Greek soldiers and merchants who swarmed in the Delta ; and one of the first steps taken by the Pharaoh was that of confining the Greeks to one area so that they should not clash with his native subjects.

For this purpose he chose the town of Naukratis, one of the old headquarters of the Greek mercenaries, and here he allowed the Greek merchants to build a purely Greek city for themselves, which should be the centre of their trade with Egypt ; and to this place the merchandise from across the Mediterranean was brought up the Nile by boat. One of the most famous inhabitants of Naukratis, it may be mentioned, was Doricharhodymis, the most beautiful woman of her time, who, during this reign, married Charaxos, the brother of the poetess Sappho, he having met her when he came over from his native island of Lesbos with a cargo of wine.

King Ahmose was an extremely clever diplomat, and with great skill he steered the fortunes of Egypt through the stormy seas of foreign policy, maintaining his friendship with the Greeks while promoting the interests of his own people. But a new power was rising in the east, and both Egypt and the Greek world were soon to feel the sharpness of its sword. The great Persian conqueror Cyrus overwhelmed both Babylon and Asia Minor during this Pharaoh's reign ; and when Ahmose died in 525 B.C., after wearing the Egyptian crown for forty-four years, everybody knew that the Persians would soon be marching into the Delta.

He was succeeded by his son Enkhkenre Psametek, or Psametek the Third, who ascended the throne only in time to meet this inevitable invasion which was

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

led by Cambyses, the successor of Cyrus. A single battle decided the fate of Egypt. Some of the Greeks deserted the Pharaoh and went over to Cambyses ; the Egyptian troops were defeated ; and the Persians marched through the Delta and into Memphis. Psametek was dethroned and put to death ; and Cambyses was crowned as Pharaoh.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Twenty-seventh to Thirty-third Dynasties

WITH the assumption of the crown of the Pharaohs by the Persian king Cambyses in 525 B.C., Manetho begins his Twenty-seventh Dynasty. The Egyptians of this time were so prosperous, and, as a result of the renaissance which had taken place during the previous dynasty, they had been so assured of their all-round superiority, that they were dumb-founded at their conquest by the Persians. They refused, in fact, to consider themselves as a nation under the heel of a foreign monarch, and they declared that Cambyses was a ruler of their own choice, a legitimate Pharaoh. They insisted upon him being crowned as Reed-king, Hornet-king, Hawk-king, Lord of the Vulture and the Cobra, Son of the Sun-god, and all the other ancient aspects of Egyptian sovereignty ; they gave him an Egyptian name, Mosutre ; and they saw to it that he paid reverence to the chief gods of Egypt.

Cambyses on his part was deeply impressed by the wealth and culture of this venerable land, and he was proud to be acknowledged as Pharaoh. Egypt's world-wide reputation as the very home of civilization had survived all its disasters ; and Cambyses had no thought of looting the country and departing, leaving some impoverished native prince as vassal-ruler. The

Egyptian crown henceforth would be vested in the Persian royal line, and Egypt would be an honourable part of the Persian empire.

He was anxious to extend his dominions along the North African coast to Cyrene and Carthage, and he sent a large expedition into the western desert to occupy the oases. Disaster overtook the force, however, and few ever returned. Cambyses then led his army in person up the Nile with the object of annexing the great Ethiopian kingdom whence had come the Pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty ; but again he met with disaster, owing to the breakdown of the food-supplies, and after suffering appalling losses from hunger and sickness, he was obliged to abandon the undertaking.

It was after these disasters that his attitude towards Egypt suddenly changed, and it is generally assumed that he became insane. Stories current in later times told how he had treated the Egyptians with ferocious cruelty from the outset ; but these seem to be contradicted by an inscription in which a high Egyptian official tells us how correctly Cambyses behaved at first. But this record then refers to a sudden " very great calamity which came to pass in the whole country, of which no one had ever seen the like in this land " ; and later on it mentions that after the death of Cambyses, his successor gave orders for the restoration of shrines which had been wrecked, the re-establishment of priestly institutions which had been ruined, and the renewal of the divine offerings which had been stopped.

Thus it seems to be true enough that the Persian king was guilty of various outrages, though not at the beginning of his reign ; yet it is not necessary to suppose that he was really insane. He evidently took a dislike

to the Egyptians, and felt much contempt for their religious beliefs. It is said that he even stabbed the sacred bull, Apis, with his dagger, to show his disgust at the worship of an animal ; but this was perhaps not so much the action of a lunatic as it was that of a fanatical Puritan.

At any rate the Egyptians came to detest him, and they were much relieved when he went back to Persia. In 520 B.C. he died, and was succeeded by Darius the First, who was crowned Pharaoh by proxy under the name Setutre, and, coming presently to Egypt, was received with rejoicings. One of his first undertakings was the opening of the canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, so that his ships might make the journey by sea around Arabia to the Persian Gulf and the mouths of the Euphrates and Tigris. He also restored the temples of various gods and built an important new temple in the oasis of El Khargeh in the western desert, dedicated to Amen-Re.

He treated his Egyptian subjects with the greatest kindness, yet in the end they revolted, and at about the time of his death in 486 B.C., they installed a native sovereign under the names Tenenptah Khebbeshe, whose brief reign came to an end when Xerxes the First, the successor of Darius, descended upon Egypt in 484 B.C. Xerxes, however, was too busy with his famous wars in Greece to bother much about Egypt, though he used Egyptian ships, men, and money in his campaigns ; and it is said that the people were greatly oppressed during his reign.

He was succeeded in 466 B.C. by Artaxerxes the First who has left little record of his rule on the banks of the Nile ; but the general condition of the country is known to us, for it was at this time that the famous

Greek traveller and historian, Herodotus, visited Egypt. In 424 B.C. he was followed by Darius the Second, who as Pharaoh was given the Egyptian name Meryamenre ; but Persian power, for the time being, had declined, and at his death in 405 B.C. Egypt entered for a while a new period of freedom.

Manetho states that the Pharaoh who was now placed upon the throne was a native of Sais, named Amyrtaios ; and his short reign from 405 to 399 B.C., of which there is no trace left at all, constitutes by itself the Twenty-eighth Dynasty.

He was succeeded by a native Pharaoh named Benre Neiforud, the founder of the Twenty-ninth Dynasty, who, in 396 B.C., made an alliance with Sparta against the Persians, and once more employed Greek mercenary troops. During his reign Egyptian prosperity increased ; and when, in 393 B.C., he was succeeded by Maekhnumre Hekor (the Achoris of the Greeks) the whole country was once more its old self, with its arts and crafts flourishing, the altars of its temples heaped with sacrifices, and its people absorbed in the peaceful pursuit of their own agricultural affairs. Hekor engaged the services of twenty thousand Greek mercenaries to defend the country against any possible attack by the Persians, but they were not called upon to fight ; and during the reign the Pharaoh was able to give his attention to the restoration and enlarging of the temples, traces of his work being found throughout the country.

Hekor was succeeded in 380 B.C. by a Pharaoh named Userre Psimut, whose brief reign was followed in 378 B.C. by the shadowy reigns of another Psimut and another Neiforud, who each held the throne but a month or two, and in the same year gave place

to Senothemibre Nakhthorhab, the founder of the Thirtieth Dynasty, whose family belonged to the city of Sebennytos, in the middle of the Delta.

The new Pharaoh was soon called upon to meet a fresh attempt by Persia to regain control of Egypt. A mixed Persian force said to have been two hundred thousand strong, augmented by twenty thousand Greek mercenaries, and working in conjunction with five hundred ships of war, made an attack upon the Delta ; but Nakhthorhab had fortified and blocked every mouth of the Nile, and the frontier forts were strongly held. The invaders were commanded jointly by a Persian and a Greek general, and the differences of opinion between these two enabled the Egyptians to harry them while their plans were undecided ; and at last the enterprise was abandoned, and Egypt remained untroubled for yet a few more years.

There was a new outburst of artistic effort, and the highest standards in sculpture and architecture were aimed at, if not always attained. From end to end of Egypt building operations were conducted, and at Thebes there was a definite attempt to raise the city out of its doldrums and to restore the fallen fortunes of the temples of Amen-Re at Karnak. This may have been due in part to the fact that the worship of the old national god had been widely adopted in the Greek world, and temples to Zeus-Ammon, as the Greeks called him, were springing up in the very heart of Greece itself.

The Pharaoh died in 361 B.C., and was succeeded by his son, Irmaenre Theher, who at once gave his support to a widespread movement against the Persians. He invaded Syria with an army of eighty thousand Egyptians, ten thousand Greek mercenaries,

and a force of a thousand Spartans under the personal command of their king, Agesilaus. The Spartan monarch, however, who was a sour-tempered, little old man with a lame leg, quarrelled with the Pharaoh, and gave his support to a rebellion raised by Theher's son, Nakhtnebf, in Egypt; and at this Theher fled to Susa, and threw himself on the mercy of the Persian king, Artaxerxes the Second, who pardoned him.

Meanwhile, however, in 359 B.C., the rebels had enthroned his son under the names Kheperkere Nakhtnebf, or Nectanebo as the Greeks called him, who proved to be the last Egyptian Pharaoh of Egypt. During his reign the prosperity of the country was maintained, and a large amount of building was undertaken, the best-known example of the work of this period being his temple on the island of Philae, just above the First Cataract, which is the earliest building on that famous site. He also gave considerable attention to Karnak, and did much to raise the prestige of the ancient priesthood of Amen-Re.

All was going well, and Egypt's position as a most venerable and highly respected country of inexhaustible wealth seemed to be secure, when, in 342 B.C., the new Persian king, Ochus, descended upon the Delta; and, when Memphis fell, Nakhtnebf fled up the Nile and disappeared into Ethiopia. He was never heard of again; and from that time onwards no native Egyptian wore the crown of the Pharaohs.

Ochus and his two successors, Arses (339-336 B.C.) and Darius the Third (336-332 B.C.), constitute the Thirty-first Dynasty; but these Persian kings have left no records of their work in Egypt, and all we know is that they treated the Egyptians with scant

consideration and were heartily detested. They were never crowned as Pharaohs, and there was no pretence of them being the chosen of the gods : they were simply foreign despots, and Egypt was a kingless province of their empire. There was no Pharaoh.

But now in an unexpected quarter there arose a deliverer—Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia. From his earliest childhood he had been brought up to believe that he was in some mystic sense the son of Zeus-Ammon ; for his mother, Olympias, had been a devotee of that god. In 333 B.C. he had defeated Darius of Persia at the Battle of Issus, and had then advanced towards Egypt with the definite purpose of being acknowledged as the son of this deity and hence as a legitimate Egyptian Pharaoh. He wanted to turn out the Persian soldiers and officials who had committed so many acts of sacrilege in Egypt ; and he hoped to unite Egypt with Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor and Syria in a great Mediterranean empire which should keep Persia confined to the territory east of the Euphrates and Tigris.

Towards the close of 332 B.C. he marched into Egypt, which was promptly surrendered to him by the last-
left of the Persian officials ; and at Memphis he was received by the Egyptians with wild enthusiasm as their deliverer from the hated Persians. One of his first actions was to pay his devotions to the sacred bull, Apis ; and presently he was crowned as Pharaoh in the temple of Ptah, under the names Amenmery Aleksandros. Early in 331 B.C. he made the journey to the oasis of Siwa in the western desert, where for some centuries there had been an oracle of Amen very celebrated throughout the Greek world, and often consulted by the Greeks ; and there the priests

arranged that the god should acknowledge him as his son.

It was recalled that the last native Pharaoh, Nectanebo, who had disappeared into Ethiopia, had said that he would return in glory ; and the story was now circulated that Alexander was the son of this Pharaoh, who was said to have employed magic powers in visiting Macedonia and becoming intimate with Queen Olympias before Alexander was born. In view of this report, or of the alternative story of his being the son of a mystical union between Olympias and Amen himself, Alexander's right to the crown of the Pharaohs was never questioned ; and in spite of his Macedonian nationality he was hailed as a true Egyptian, and in later years was regarded as the founder of the Thirty-second Dynasty.

Before he left Egypt he founded a great Greek city, named after him Alexandria, on the sea-coast at the north-western corner of the Delta ; and here it was his intention to reside from time to time in the years to come. The city was to take the place of Naukratis as the emporium of Graeco-Egyptian trade, and was to be the most important maritime port in the southern Mediterranean.

In the early summer of 331 B.C. he marched away to pursue the fallen Darius into the heart of the Persian empire ; and Egypt never saw him again. His success in Persia enlarged the scope of his ambitions, and his purpose now was to create a world-empire of which Alexandria should be one of the capitals ; but after he had conquered the Orient and had carried his arms into far-off India, he returned to Babylon and there died in 323 B.C., just as he was about to lead an expedition around Africa. His body was ultimately

brought to Alexandria, and was there buried in a splendid mausoleum.

He was succeeded by his half-brother, Philip Arrhidæus, and by his posthumous son, Alexander, both of whom were crowned by proxy as Pharaohs, and were given Egyptian names. But in the division of the empire which ensued, the viceroyalty of Egypt was assumed by one of Alexander's generals, Ptolemy, who was reputed to be his illegitimate half-brother ; and in due course this Ptolemy declared himself Pharaoh of Egypt, thus founding the Thirty-third Dynasty. He and his successors reigned at Alexandria and lived a purely Greek life ; and since the city soon rivalled Athens as a centre of Greek culture, the story of the next three centuries during which these Macedonian kings held the Egyptian throne should be told rather in a history of the Greek world than in a history of Egypt.

Yet the Egyptian nation continued its life and pursued its business in the old way ; and while the royal court at Alexandria had little concern with the real Egypt except in the appointment of officials and the collection of taxes, the native inhabitants of the interior of the Delta and of Upper Egypt had equally little concern with Alexandria, and showed no inclination to adopt the Greek habits of life.

As time passed Alexandria became more and more fully the patron-city of Greek artists, sculptors, architects, scientists, philosophers, and men of letters ; but elsewhere in Egypt the ancient Egyptian traditions in art, architecture, thought, and custom were maintained as though the people had never heard of Greece. In fact, throughout the whole dynasty the Greek and Egyptian civilizations flourished side by side as two

distinct systems of life, the one confined to Alexandria and the short stretch of sea-coast to east and west of the city, and the other spread all over the rest of the country.

Ptolemy the First, Ptolemy the Second, and Ptolemy the Third were all enlightened rulers, in whose time Alexandria grew to be the most magnificent Greek city in the world, adorned by beautiful Greek buildings, and being particularly famous for its great Library and for the marvellous Pharos lighthouse which was reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. But from the accession of Ptolemy the Fourth in 222 B.C. to the death of Ptolemy the Thirteenth in 51 B.C., the Ptolemies and their queens, most of whom were named Cleopatra, presented a sorry spectacle of depravity, intrigue, and murder, in strange contrast with their patronage of the arts and sciences.

In the case of each Ptolemy the Egyptians went through the empty formality of crowning him as a Pharaoh, calling him Reed-king, Hornet-king, Hawk-king, Lord of the Vulture and the Cobra, Son of the Sun-god, and so forth, and giving him a string of names to match these different aspects of Egyptian sovereignty. In the temple-sculptures they represented him dressed as a traditional Pharaoh in the presence of the old gods, and attended by priests robed as in ancient times ; but actually the king seldom left the luxuries of his Greek palace and city to visit his Egyptian dominions, he wore only Greek dress, and he worshipped the gods in the Greek manner in temples built in Greek style.

The dynasty's hold upon Egyptian loyalty was maintained by rich gifts to the priesthoods of the ancient

gods ; and magnificent temples, built in the Egyptian style, were erected throughout the country. Some of the greatest temples amongst those the ruins of which are now visited and admired date from this period—Denderah, Esneh, Edfu, Kom Ombo, Philae, for example ; while the huge pylons in front of the temple of Karnak were built in this age.

Meanwhile, across the Mediterranean, Rome had become the great power in the world ; and in 48 B.C. Julius Caesar, who had come to Alexandria in pursuit of his defeated enemy Pompey, remained in the city to look into the affairs of the country. Ptolemy the Thirteenth had left his throne jointly to his son and daughter, Ptolemy the Fourteenth and Cleopatra ; but these two had quarrelled, and Cleopatra was in exile. She managed, however, to present herself secretly to Caesar, who, having lost his heart to her, took up her cause, her brother being killed in the consequent fighting, while a younger brother, Ptolemy the Fifteenth, who then became joint-sovereign with her, died a little later.

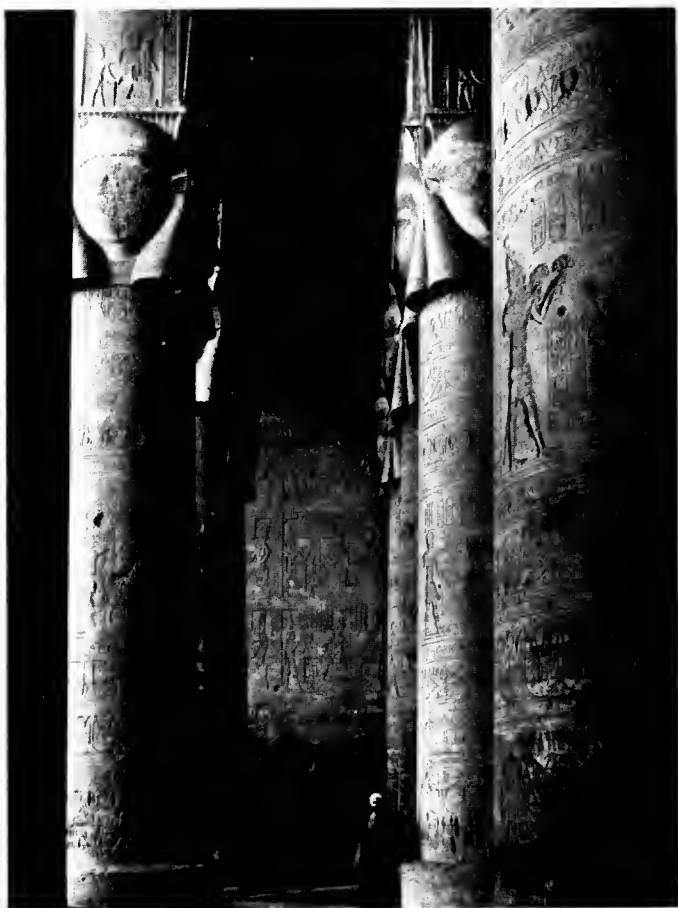
Cleopatra married Caesar according to Egyptian law, and had a son by him, Ptolemy the Sixteenth, commonly called Caesarion ; and when Caesar went back to Rome she followed him there with her baby, and for some time lived in one of his palaces. Caesar had thought of making himself actual monarch of Rome, and it seems that he intended to marry Cleopatra according to Roman law and thus to found a royal line with her as his queen. She was the richest woman in the world, for Egypt was her personal possession ; she was a pure Macedonian Greek, for her Ptolemaic ancestors had made no Egyptian marriages, and there was not a drop of Egyptian blood in

her veins ; and at the same time she was beautiful, clever, and brilliant.

Caesar was assassinated, however, before these plans could mature, and Cleopatra was obliged to return to Egypt. In Rome Marc Antony rose to be the leading personage ; and at length Cleopatra formed an alliance with him, hoping that he would ultimately establish the Roman monarchy which Caesar had failed to create. Antony presently went over to Alexandria, and in the end was married to Cleopatra, by whom he had three children ; but Caesar's nephew, Octavian, led the Roman republicans against him, and finally defeated him at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.

Antony and Cleopatra fled back to Alexandria, and when Octavian had pursued them thither and had again defeated them, Antony killed himself, and Cleopatra a few weeks later did likewise. Octavian then caused Caesarion, the last of the Ptolemies, to be put to death, and took Egypt as his personal possession. The Egyptians, however, had regarded Julius Caesar as their legal sovereign, as husband of their queen, Cleopatra ; and now they accepted Octavian as king by right of his relationship to Caesar. They went through the formality of crowning him, by proxy, as a Pharaoh, giving him the customary names and titles ; but meanwhile he had become the first Emperor of Rome under the name Augustus, and thus while in Rome he was the first citizen—a sort of hereditary President of the Republic—he was in Egyptian eyes a Pharaoh.

From that time onwards until the reign of the Emperor Decius in A.D. 250, each Emperor of Rome automatically became Pharaoh of Egypt, and was given the customary Egyptian names ; but in Egypt



LUXOR

his authority was maintained by a Roman governor. In the temple of Esneh in Upper Egypt this Decius may still be seen represented in the sculptures as a traditional Pharaoh worshipping the ancient gods of the Egyptians.

After that, however, this custom gradually fell into abeyance ; and presently Egypt adopted Christianity and no more temples were built. At length the power of Rome collapsed, and Egypt became part of the Byzantine empire, until in A.D. 639-640 the Arabs invaded and captured the country, whereupon the majority of Egyptians adopted the faith of Islam, while the minority, now called Copts, remained Christians. These two divisions of the Egyptian race never intermarried ; and thus to-day the nation is still divided into Mohammedans and Copts, both being descendants of the ancient Egyptian people, differing to some extent from one another in character but very slightly in type.

Such is the long story of ancient Egypt, much of which, as the reader was warned at the beginning, is but the record of a procession of Pharaohs, of many of whom little is known. Yet, as will have been seen, there is a very full record of the activities of some of these far-off kings ; and the student who goes further into the subject will find himself confronted in certain periods with a vast mass of material, and will become familiar not only with the names of the Pharaohs but with those of all the main personages in their court. Besides documents and inscriptions, the dry sands of Upper Egypt have preserved innumerable objects from all periods of ancient Egyptian history ; and thus the manners and customs of this engaging nation are also able to be studied, with the result that the old subjects of the Pharaohs seem to be a living people who by some

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

miracle have survived the wreckage of the centuries. The story of ancient Egypt is unique in the great range of time which it covers ; and, in view of the remote period with which much of it deals, it is unique also in its frequent supply of detailed information in epochs when the history of other countries is silent and obscure.



LIST OF KINGS AND THEIR DATES

(Egyptian history begins traditionally with a dynasty of Hornet-kings of Lower Egypt, a dynasty of Reed-kings of Heracleopolis, a dynasty of Hawk-kings of Hieraconpolis, and a dynasty of Hawk-kings of Thinis. Of this last there are actual remains.)

THE DYNASTY BEFORE MENES

B.C.

3757 Establishment of the Hawk-Dynasty at Thinis, which lasted 350 years.

3500-3475 (?) Ro (Probably seventh king of the Thinis dynasty).

3475-3450 (?) KET

3450-3425 (?) SELK (?) (The Scorpion)

3425 (?) - 3407 NARMER

(The following lengths of the individual reigns in the first five dynasties are obtained from the reconstructed 'Palermo Stone' Annals, supplemented by Manetho and the Turin Papyrus. The date of Menes is confirmed by the correct position of the calendar in about 3400 B.C.)

The names in curved brackets are those given by Manetho and the Greek writers. It is unnecessary to record these after the Fifteenth Dynasty, except occasionally.

The names in rectangular brackets are those sometimes used by other Egyptologists. They represent either alternative or obsolete readings.

THE FIRST DYNASTY

3407-3345	OHE MENI (Menes)	[Aha Mena]
3345-3288	KHENTI ATHUTHI (Athothis)	[Zer Ta, Khent Atoti]
3288-3259	UTHO ATHUTHI KHENKHEN (Kenkenes)	[Zet Ata Zeser]
3259-3233	HENNEIT (Uenephes)	[Merneit]
3233-3193	UDI HESAPTI (Usaphais)	[Den, Udimu, Semti]
3193-3180	OTHIB MERBI (Miebis)	[Azab Merpaba]
3180-3171	MERKHET SHEMSU (Semempses)	[Senerkhet]
3171-3143	BEHU BINETH (Bienethes)	[Qa Sen, Qebh]

THE SECOND DYNASTY

3143-3096	NETERBEU BUTHO (Boethos) [<i>Bezau</i>]
3096-3057	NEBRE KEKEU (Kaiechos) [<i>Ranëb Këkau</i>]
3057-3019	BINETER (Binothris) [<i>Neteren, Neneter</i>]
3019-3002	SEKHEMIB UOTHNES (Tlas, Otlas) [<i>Uaznes Perabsen</i>]
3002-2965	SENDI (Sethenes) [<i>Send, Senedi</i>]
2965-2933	NEFERKERE (Nephercheres) [<i>Neferkara</i>]
2933-2925	NEFERKESOKAR (Sesochris) [<i>Sekerneferka</i>]
2925-2914	HUTHEFI KERE (Chaires) [<i>Hezef, Huzefa</i>]
2914-2887	THETHI KHENERI (Chenneres) [<i>Khasekhemui</i>]

(*The total of the known lengths of the Third to Sixth Dynasties subtracted from the Turin Papyrus' total of 955 years after the close of the Sixth Dynasty, gives the total length of the first two dynasties.*)

THE THIRD DYNASTY

2887-2868	NEBKERE BEBY (Necherophes) [<i>Nebka Bebi</i>]
2868-2849	NETERKHET THOSER RETHO (Tosorthos) [<i>Žeser Sa, Žoser</i>]
2849-2843	THOSER TATI (Tosertasis) [<i>Žeser Teta, Žoserteti</i>]
2843-2837	NEBKERE SETHF EKE (Aches) [<i>Sezes</i>]
2837-2813	HUNI NEFERKERE (Kerpheres) [<i>Sanekht, Hennekhht</i>]
2813-2789	NEMAET SNOFRU (Sephuris) [<i>Sneferu, Snefru</i>]

(*The lengths of all the reigns in this Third Dynasty are given in the Turin Papyrus.*)

THE FOURTH DYNASTY

2789-2766	METHERU KHEUF (Cheops) [<i>Khufu</i>]
2766-2758	REDADEF (Ratoises) [<i>Razedef, Dedefre</i>]
2758-2740	USERIB KHEFRE (Chephren) [<i>Khafra</i>]
2740-2739	SHERU (Soris) [<i>Sharu</i>]
2739-2721	KEKHET MENKEURE (Mencheres, Mykerinos) [<i>Menkaura</i>]
2721-2717	SHEPSESKEF (Sebercheres)
2717-2715	LEMHOTPE (Thamphthis, Iamphthis) [<i>Imhotep</i>]

(*Pliny gives 68 years for the first five kings of the Fourth Dynasty; and the Turin Papyrus completes the record.*)

THE FIFTH DYNASTY

2715-2708	NEBKHEY USERKEF (Usercheres)
2708-2696	SAHURE (Snephres, Sefhres)
2696-2692	NEFEREFRE KHERNEFER (Cheres)
2692-2685	SHEPSEKERE ISESI (Sisires)
2685-2664	NEFERIRKERE KEKEI (Nephercheres) [<i>Neferarkara</i>]
2664-2653	NUSERRE RATHO (Rathures) [<i>Raenuser An</i>]
2653-2645	MENKEURE IKEURE (Mencheres) [<i>Menkauhor Akauhor</i>]
2645-2617	DADKERE ISESI (Tatcherer) [<i>Zedkara Assa</i>]
2617-2587	UNNOS (Onnos) [<i>Unis, Unas</i>]

(*The Turin Papyrus gives the lengths of the reigns of all the kings of the Fifth Dynasty except the third.*)

THE SIXTH DYNASTY

2587-2579	TOTI (Othoes) [<i>Teta, Teti</i>]
2579-2573	USERKERE ITY [<i>Userkara Aty</i>]
2573-2553	MERYRE PLOP I (Phios) [<i>Pepy, Pepi</i>]
2553-2549	MERENRE MEHTIEMSUF I (Methusuphis) [<i>Mernere, Mehtimsaf</i>]
2549-2459	NEFERKERE PLOP II (Phios) [<i>Pepy, Pepi</i>]
2459-2458	MERENRE MEHTIEMSUF II (Mentheshuphis)

(*The Turin Papyrus gives the lengths of the reigns of all the kings of the Sixth Dynasty except the first two.*)

2458-2452 Six years without a King (*Turin Papyrus*)

(*The Turin Papyrus here gives the total of 955 years since the accession of Menes.*)

THE SEVENTH DYNASTY

B.C.

2452-2447	NETERKERE
2447-2435	MENKERE NITOKRI (Nitokris) [<i>Netaqerti</i>]
2435-2413	NEFERKERE HUNU (Murtaios)
2413-2389	NEFERKERE NEBY
2389-2377	DEDKESHMIRE IB (Thuosimares)

(*The Turin Papyrus and Manetho give 75 years for the Seventh Dynasty.*)

THE EIGHTH DYNASTY

(*The following are the kings given in the Abydos List, but there were others also*)

2377-2271	NEFERKERE KHENDUI
	MERENHOR
	SNEFERKE
	NEKERE
	NEFERKERE TEROROL [<i>Telulu</i>]
	NEFERKEHOR
	NEFERKERE PIOPSONB [<i>Peppsenb</i>]
	SNEFERKE ENNU
KEURE
	NEFERKEURE
	NEFERKEUHOR
	NEFERIRKERE

(*The Turin Papyrus gives 181 years for the Seventh and Eighth Dynasties together, which is 106 for the latter; and this is confirmed by Manetho. But the lengths of the individual reigns are mostly unknown.*)

THE NINTH DYNASTY

2271-2264 WAHKERE AKHTOI I [*Khefy*]
 2264-2252 MERYBRE AKHTOI II
 2252-2227 NEBKEURE AKHTOI III
 2227-2221 MERYKERE AKHTOI IV

(*The lengths of the reigns of the first two kings of the Ninth Dynasty are known; the other two are assumed from historical evidence.*)

THE TENTH DYNASTY

2221-2196 (Fragments of the names of 9 kings in the Turin Papyrus)

(*The Tenth Dynasty was suppressed at the close of the reign of the third king of the Eleventh Dynasty.*)

THE ELEVENTH DYNASTY

(*The Eleventh Dynasty was founded in the south at the same time that the Ninth Dynasty was founded in the north.*)

2271-2221 WAHENKH INTEF [*Antef*]
 2221-2211 NAKHTNEBTEPNEFER INTEF
 2211-2196 SENKHIBTOUI MENTUHOTPE I
 2196-2171 NEBHETPRE MENTUHOTPE II
 2171-2124 NEBHAPETRE MENTUHOTPE III
 2124-2114 SENKKHERE MENTUHOTPE IV
 2114-2111 NEBTOUIRE MENTUHOTPE V

(*The Turin Papyrus gives the length of the Eleventh Dynasty as 160 years. The lengths of the individual reigns, except the second and fourth, are known.*)

THE TWELFTH DYNASTY

2111-2082 SEHOTPEIBRE AMENEMHET I (Ammanemes) [*Sehotepabra*]
 2082-2046 KHEPERKERE SESURI I (Sesostri) [*Sensret, Useresen*]
 2046-2011 NUBKEURE AMENEMHET II
 2011-1998 KHEKHEPERRE SESURI II
 1998-1959 KHEKEURE SESURI III (Lachares, Chachares)
 1959-1910 NEMAERE AMENEMHET III (Lamaris) [*Nemaatra, Maatenra*]
 1910-1901 MAEKHERURE AMENEMHET IV [*Maatkhture, Maatkherura*]
 1901-1898 SOBKNOFRU (Skemiophis) [*Sebekneferure*]

(*The lengths of the reigns in the Twelfth Dynasty are all known; and the dates are fixed astronomically, subject to a Sothic cycle. The Turin Papyrus gives the total length of the dynasty, 213 years.*)

THE THIRTEENTH
B.C. DYNASTY

1898-1895 KHETOUIRE UGEF
1895-1889 SEKHEMKERE

(The north was gradually lost, and the
dynasty henceforth consisted of many
local kings in the south, of whom the
following are the most important :)

FUIBRE HERWET
SOBKHOTPE I
[*Sebekhotep*]

MERMESHOI
SOBKHOTPE II
NEFERHOTPE I
SOBKHOTPE III
SOBKHOTPE IV
SOBKHOTPE V
WAHIBRE IEUB

1820-1797(?) MERNEFERRE AY
(The Thirteenth Dynasty became southern
vassal of the Hyksos kings of the
Fifteenth Dynasty.)

NEFERHOTPE II
REHOTPE
SOBKHOTPE VI
SOBKHOTPE VII
KHENTHER I
KHENTHER II
NEBFURE
1746-1745

(The Thirteenth Dynasty suppressed by
Khyan of the Fifteenth Dynasty.)

THE FOURTEENTH
DYNASTY

1879-1812 (Many local kings
of different provinces of Lower
Egypt.)

1812 (?) THETUMRE
(Toutimaos)
(The Fourteenth Dynasty became northern
vassal of the Hyksos kings of the
Fifteenth Dynasty.)

(Many local kings in Lower
Egypt)

1745 (The Fourteenth Dynasty
suppressed by Khyan of the
Fifteenth Dynasty.)

THE FIFTEENTH
DYNASTY

(The Fifteenth Dynasty was founded in
the eastern Delta by the Hyksos king
Salatis in 1857 B.C.)

1857-1838 SANATI (Salatis)
1838-1827 BEBNUM (Bnon)

1827-1813 MERUSRRE YA-
PAKHAL (Apachnas)
1813-1777 OEUSRRE APOPI
(Apophis)
(This Apopi was the first Hyksos king to
rule all Egypt.)

1777-1727 SEUSRENRE
KHYAN (Ionias)
(The date of Khyan is fixed by his adjust-
ment of the calendar.)

THE SEVENTEENTH DYNASTY

1727 DEDHOTPERE DUDUMOSE I [*Dudumes*]
(The Seventeenth Dynasty was founded in the south on the death of Khyan. Amongst the more important kings were the following :—)

MENTUEMSUF
 DEDNEFERRE DUDUMOSE II
 SOBKEMSUF I [*Sebekemsaf*]
 SOBKEMSUF II
 SOBKEMSUF III
 WEPWETEMSUF
 INTEFOE I [*Antefaa*]
 INTEFOE II
 INTEFOE III
 INTEFOE IV
 PEHTINUBRE
 SEKHENTENRE
 SENAKHTENRE TAUOE

1600-1585 SEQENENRE TAUOE
(The war between Seqenenre of the Seventeenth Dynasty and Apopi of the Sixteenth Dynasty.)

1585-1576 UTHKHEPPERRE KEMOSE [*Kames*]
(The total length of the Seventeenth Dynasty, 151 years, is given by Manetho and Syncellus.)

1727-1678 MAEIBRE ASHSHI
 (Assis)
(Little by little the Fifteenth Dynasty now lost all Upper Egypt.)

THE SIXTEENTH DYNASTY

(The Hyksos kings of the Sixteenth Dynasty ruled only in the north.)

1678-1658 (?) NEBKHEPESHRE
 APOPI

1658-1596 *(Several Hyksos kings of Lower Egypt.)*

1596-1576 OEQENENRE
 APOPI

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

B.C.

1576-1551 NEBPEHTIRE AHMOSE (Amosis) [*Ahmes, Ahmeses*]
 1551-1526 THOSERKERE AMENHOTPE I (Amenophis, Amenophes) [*Zeserkara Amenhotep, Amenhetep*]

1526-1513 OEKHEPERKERE THUTMOSE I (Tuthmosis) [*Thothmes, Tehutimes*]
 1513-1493 OEKHEPERENRE THUTMOSE II
 1493-1440 MENKHEPERRE THUTMOSE III
 (The reign of Thutmose III includes that of MAETKERE HETSHEPSUT)

1440-1415 OEKHEPERUERE AMENHOTPE II
 1415-1406 MENKHEPERURE THUTMOSE IV
 1406-1370 NEBMAERE AMENHOTPE III
 1370-1354 NEFERKHEPERURE AMENHOTPE IV, afterwards named AKHNATON [*Ikhnaton, Akhenaten, K'huenaten*]

(The reign includes that of SMENKHKERE)

1354-1345 NEBKHEPERURE TUTENKHAMEN [*Tutankhamen*]
 1345-1341 KHEPERKHEPERURE AY [*Eye*]
 1341-1317 THOSERKHEPERURE HOREMHAB [*Herenheb, Harmhab*]

(Some of the dates in this dynasty are astronomically fixed; and the dating in general is certain within a year or two.)

THE NINETEENTH DYNASTY

(There was the beginning of a Solthic cycle in the reign of Rameses I, and the date is thus closely fixed.)

1317-1316 MENPEHTIRE RAMESES I (Rameses) [*Remoses, Ramesu, Ramses*]

1316-1295 MENMAERE SETY I (Sethos)

1295-1229 USERMAERE RAMESES II

1229-1220 BENRE HOTPEHERMAE MERENPTAH (Menephthah)

1220-1219 MENMAERE AMENMOSIS [*Amenmeses*]

1219-1213 AKHENRE MERENPTAH SIPTAH [*Siptah*]

1213-1209 USERKHEPERURE MERENPTAH SETY II

1209-1207 (Period of anarchy)

(The unknown length of the period of anarchy makes the dates in the next dynasty not quite certain.)

THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY

1207-1205	USERKHEURE SETNAKHT
1205-1174	USERMAERE RAMESES III
1174-1168	HIQMAERE RAMESES IV
1168-1164	USERMAERE SEKHEPERENRE RAMESES V
1164-1159	NEBMAERE RAMESES VI
1159-1157	USERRE RAMESES VII
1157-1155	USERMAERE AKHNAMEN RAMESES VIII
1155-1153	SEKHENRE RAMESES IX
1153-1135	NEFERKEURE RAMESES X
1135-1129	KHEPERMAERE RAMESES XI
1129-1101	MENMAERE RAMESES XII

269

THE TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY

1101-1080	NESUBENEDED (Simendes) [<i>Nesibanebdadu</i>] (This reign includes that of HIRHOR in the south)
1080-1063	OEKHEPERRE PESEBKHENNU I [<i>Pasebkharu</i>]
1063-1023	KHEPERKKHERE PEYNOTHEM [<i>Paynozem, Pinezem</i>]
1023-974	USERMAERE AMENEMOPET [<i>Amenemapt</i>]
974-958	NETERKHEPERRE SIAMEN [<i>Saamen</i>]
958-946	HETHTHIQRE PESEBKHENNU II

THE TWENTY-SECOND DYNASTY

(*The date of Sheshonk I is closely fixed by his war with Rehoboam of Judah.*)

946-925	HETHKHEPERRE SHESHONK I [<i>Shesheng, Shashang</i>]
925-889	SEKHEMKHEPERRE OSARKON I [<i>Usarkon, Osorkon, Uasarken</i>]
889-883	USERMAERE TAKELOTH I [<i>Takerai, Thekeleth, Takelot</i>]
883-857	USERMAERE OSARKON II (This reign includes that of SHESHONK II)
857-839	HETHKHEPERRE TAKELOTH II
839-787	USERMAERE SHESHONK III (This reign includes that of PEMAY)
787-753	OEKHEPERRE SHESHONK IV

THE TWENTY-THIRD DYNASTY

753-731	SEHERIBRE PEDUBAST [<i>Pedibast, Petabast</i>]
731-718	OEKHEPERRE OSARKON III (This reign includes that of TAKELOTH III)

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DYNASTY

718-713	WAHKERE BEKENRANEF (Bocchoris) [<i>Bakenrenef</i>]
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THE TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTY

713-701	NEFERKERE SHEBEKE [<i>Shabaka</i>]
701-689	DEKKEURE SHEBETOKE [<i>Shabataka</i>]
689-663	NEFERTUMKHURE TAHARQA
663-661	BEKERE TONTAMEN [<i>Tanutamen</i>]

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THE THIRTY-FIRST DYNASTY

(Kings of Persia)

B.C.

342-339	ARTAXERXES III OCHOS
339-336	ARSES
336-332	DARIUS III

THE THIRTY-SECOND DYNASTY

332-323	AMENMERY ALEKSANDROS. (ALEXANDER THE GREAT)
323	PHILIP ARRHIDAEUS, and ALEXANDER AEGUS

THE THIRTY-THIRD DYNASTY

(*Ptolemy I was first Viceroy and then King of Egypt.*)

323-283	PTOLEMY I (Ptolemaios) SOTER
283-246	PTOLEMY II PHILADELPHOS
246-222	PTOLEMY III EUERGETES
222-205	PTOLEMY IV PHILOPATOR
205-181	PTOLEMY V EPIPHANES
181	PTOLEMY VI EUPATOR
181-146	PTOLEMY VII PHILOMETOR
146	PTOLEMY VIII NEOS PHILOPATOR
146-117	PTOLEMY IX EUERGETES, 'PHYSKON'
117-106	PTOLEMY X SOTER, 'LATHYROS'
106-87	PTOLEMY XI ALEXANDER
87-80	PTOLEMY XII ALEXANDER
80-51	PTOLEMY XIII NEOS DIONYSOS, 'AULETES'
51-47	PTOLEMY XIV
47-44	PTOLEMY XV
51-30	CLEOPATRA

INDEX

- Abraham, 72, 75, 78, 83, 90
 Abu Simbel, 178, 234, 243
 Agesilaus of Sparta, 252
 Ahhotpe, Queen, 105
 Ahhotpe, Queen-Mother,
 104-5, 111
 Ahmose, Khnumibre, 244-5
 Ahmose, Nebpehtire, 97, 99,
 100-4, 107, 108, 111,
 117, 139, 209, 213
 Ahmose, Queen Nofretire,
 100-5, 107
 Ahmose-Hent-Temehu,
 Queen, 107, 112, 117-
 18
 Akhnaton, see Amenhotpe
 IV
 Akhtoi I, Wahkere, 61
 Akhtoi II, Meryibre, 61
 Akhtoi III, Nebkeure, 61-4
 Akhtoi IV, Merykere, 61-2
 Aleksandros, see Alexander
 the Great
 Alexander Aegus, 255
 Alexander the Great, 253-5
 Alexandria, 254 ff.
 Amenemhet I, Schotpeibre,
 71, 72-4, 90
 Amenemhet II, Nubkeure,
 76-7
 Amenemhet III, Nemaere,
 81-6, 88
 Amenemhet IV, Mackhe-
 rure, 86
 Amenemopet, Usermaere,
 211, 215
 Amenhotpe I, Thoserkere,
 104-7, 108, 209, 213
 Amenhotpe II, Oekheper-
 ure, 132-4
 Amenhotpe III, Nebmaere,
 139-47, 149, 163, 187,
 188, 214
 Amenhotpe IV, Neferkhe-
 perure, 144, 148-59,
 163, 169, 214
 Amenhotpe, Highpriest,
 201-3
 Amenhotpe, son-of-Hapi,
 146
 Amenirdes, Queen, 233
 Amenmosis, Menmaere,
 182, 184
 Amyrtaios, King, 250
 Animals, Sacred, 189
 Antony, Marc, 258
 Apopi, Oeqenenre, 95-9
 Apopi, Oeusrre, 91-2
 Arisu the Syrian, 183-4
 Arrhidacus, Philip, 255

INDEX

- Arsēs, King of Persia, 252
 Art, 21, 23, 68, 89, 93, 143,
 151, 155, 166, 188, 194,
 241, 250, 255
 Artatama, King of Mitanni,
 136
 Artaxerxes I, 249-50
 Artaxerxes II, 252
 Artaxerxes III, Ochōs, 252
 Ashurbanipal of Assyria,
 235-7
 Ashshī, Maeibre, 94
 Assyrians, the, 223, 229,
 232, 235 ff.
 Athuthi, King, 22, 23
 Aton Heresy, the, 146, 149-
 64, 169, 186
 Augustus, Emperor, 258
 Ay, Kheperkheperure, 148,
 159, 162-3
 Ay, Merneferre, 91-2

 Bebnūm, 91
 Bekenranef, Wahkere, 229-
 30, 232, 235
 Bey, 183
 Bible, the, references to, 66,
 72-3, 83, 93, 102, 133,
 154, 161, 186, 218-19,
 233, 237, 241-3
 Bineter, 24-5
 Bint-Anath, Princess, 176
 Birket Habu, 142
 Bubastite Gate at Karnak,
 219, 222
 Byblos, Prince of, 204-5
 Byzantium, Egypt under, 259
 Caesarion, see Ptolemy XVI
 Cairo Museum, 42, 77, 107,
 147, 171, 179, 182, 207,
 210
 Calendar, Egyptian, 3-6, 93
 Cambyses of Persia (also
 Kambythe of Egypt),
 246, 247-9
 Charaxos, 245
 Cheops, see Kheuf
 City of the Horizon, the,
 150 ff.
 Cleopatra, 7, 257-8
 Cleopatra's Needle, 130
 Colossi of Thebes, 142
 Costume, 21-2, 144, 167
 Cyrus of Persia, 245

 Dadkere, 46-7
 Darius I of Persia (Taruish
 I), 249
 Darius II of Persia (Taruish
 II), 250
 Darius III of Persia, 252,
 254
 David, 133, 161
 Dead, care for the, 49-50,
 59-60
 Dêr el-Bahri, Temple of, 68
 121, 132, 212-14
 Doricha-Rhodopis, 245
 Dudumose, Dedhotpere, 94
 Dynasties: Predynastic
 Egypt, 13-19
 First, 20-3
 Second, 23-6
 Third, 26-33

INDEX

- Dynasties (*continued*)—
 Fourth, 34-40
 Fifth, 41-8
 Sixth, 49-57, 68, 73
 Seventh, 57
 Eighth, 57-8
 Ninth, 61-4
 Tenth, 64-6
 Eleventh, 66-71
 Twelfth, 71, 72-87, 223, 227
 Thirteenth, 88-92
 Fourteenth, 89-92
 Fifteenth, 91-4
 Sixteenth, 94-9
 Seventeenth, 94-9
 Eighteenth, 100-64, 169, 170, 176
 Nineteenth, 165-84
 Twentieth, 184-90
 Twenty-first, 207-17
 Twenty-second, 214-17, 218-22
 Twenty-third, 222-9
 Twenty-fourth, 229-30
 Twenty-fifth, 230, 231-7
 Twenty-sixth, 237-46
 Twenty-seventh, 247-50
 Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth, 250
 Thirtieth, 251-2
 Thirty-first, 252-3
 Thirty-second, 254
 Thirty-third, 255-8
- Egypt, Predynastic, 13-19
 Enkhsenamen (Enkhsenpeaton), Queen, 158, 160
 Esarhaddon of Assyria, 235
- Famines, 29, 70, 71
 Fayûm, Labyrinth and Reservoir at, 82-4, 89
 Fuibre, 89
- Gilukhipa, Queen, 144, 149
 Greeks, the, 222-3, 239-46, 251-7
 Gurneh, Temple of, 170
 Gyges of Lydia, 238-9
- Harris Papyrus, 198
 Hekor, Maekhnumre, 250
 Henneit, Queen, 22
 Herkhuf, 53-5, 56
 Herodotus, 2, 34, 80, 83, 88
 Hetshepsut, Queen, Maetkere, 111, 112-16, 117-25, 130, 187, 192
 Hetshepsut-Merytre, Princess, 114, 127, 130 ff.
 Hirhor, 203-6, 207-9, 213
 Hittites, the, 129, 162, 168, 169, 171-6, 192
 Hoibre, Wahibre, 243-4
 Horemhab, Thoserkheperrure, 163-4, 168, 186
 Hyksos Pharaohs, 91-102, 104, 108, 161
- Egypt, Extent and Climate, 10-13
 Ibi, Governor of the South, 56-7

INDEX

- Iemhotpe, 40
 Ineni the architect, 111-12,
 115
 Intef, Wahrenkh, 61, 62, 64,
 67
 Isaiah the Prophet, 233
 Isesi, Shapseskere, 43-4
 Israelites, the, 72-3, 78, 90,
 93, 102, 108, 161-2,
 180-1, 218-19, 233
 Istnofret, Queen, 179, 180
 Iuepet, King, 222, 223
 Iuepet, Prince and High-
 priest, 218

 Jacob, 78, 93
 Jehoahaz of Judah, 242
 Jeremiah the Prophet, 242,
 243
 Jews, the, see Israelites
 Joseph, 83, 93
 Josephus, 90, 146, 161
 Josiah of Judah, 241-2
 Julius Caesar, 257-8

 Kadashman-Enlil of Baby-
 lon, 145
 Kadesh, Battle of, 171-8
 Kadesh, King of, 125-7, 129
 Kambythe, Mosutre, see
 Cambyses
 Kegenini the Philosopher,
 29
 Kekeu, Nebre, 24
 Kemose, Uthkheperre, 97-9
 Keres, Prince, 105
 Khebbeshe, Tenenptah, 249

 Khefre, Userib, 38-9
 Khemwar, Prince and High-
 priest, 179
 Kheneri Thethi, 25-7
 Kherenefer, Neferefre, 43
 Khetasar, King of the Hit-
 tites, 174
 Kheuf, Metheru, 34-8, 39
 Khshershe, see Xerxes
 Khyan, Seuserenre, 92-4
 Kingship, Peculiarities of
 Egyptian, 7-9

 Labour conditions, 36-7,
 165, 170
 Labyrinth at Fayûm, 83-4,
 89

 Maekere, Queen, 209, 213
 Maenofrure, Queen, 179
 Manetho, 3, 14, 16, 25, 26,
 32, 34, 91, 92, 99, 100,
 101, 104, 107, 146, 161,
 185, 207, 222, 229, 235,
 247, 250
 Mastaba-el-Firaun, 48
 Matriarchal Law of Suc-
 cession, 9, 25, 104
 Medinet Habu, Temple of,
 106, 193-4, 233
 Mehtiemsuf I, Merenre, 52-
 4
 Mehtiemsuf II, Merenre, 57
 Menes (Meni), 7, 16, 19,
 20-2, 32
 Menkeure, 46
 Menkeure, Kekhet, 39-40

INDEX

- Menkheperre, Highpriest, 210-11, 213-14
- Mentuemhet, Governor of Thebes, 236-8
- Mentuhotpe I, Senkhibtoui, 64, 66
- Mentuhotpe II, Nebheptre, 66-8
- Mentuhotpe III, Nebha-
petre, 68-9, 121
- Mentuhotpe IV, Senkhkere, 69-70
- Mentuhotpe V, Nebtouire, 70-1
- Merbi, 22
- Merenptah, Bienre Hot-
pehermae, 179, 180-2, 183, 186, 191, 214
- Mermeshoi, 89
- Mesaherte, Highpriest, 209, 213
- Metella, King of the Hit-
tites, 171-4
- Moses, 161-2
- Mutemuya, Queen, 137
- Nakhthorhab, Senoth-
emibre, 251, 254
- Nakhtnebf, Kheperkere, 252
- Nebkere-Beby, 26-7
- Nebuchadnezzar of Baby-
lon, 242-3
- Neferhotpe, 89, 91
- Neferirkere, 44-5
- Neferkere, 25
- Neferkere, Huni, 29
- Neiforud, Benre, 250
- Neit, Worship of, 189, 238
- Neithotpe, Queen, 20
- Neko, Wahemibre, 241-3
- Neko, Prince of Sais, 235-7
- Nemroth, King of Hermo-
polis, 225-7
- Nesubenedded, Hethkhe-
perre, 203-6, 207-8
- Nesubenedded, Highpriest, 211, 213-14
- Neterkere, 57
- Nitokri, Princess, 239
- Nitokri, Queen, 57
- Nofret, Statue of, 32
- Nofretiri, Queen, 148, 155, 150, 162, 163
- Nofrure, Princess, 112-17, 123, 127
- Nothemmut, Queen, 163
- Nothemt, Queen, 207, 213
- Nuserre, 45-6
- Osarkon I, Sekhemkhe-
perre, 220
- Osarkon II, Usermaere, 221
- Osarkon III, Oekheperre, 223-9
- Osarkon, Highpriest, 221-2
- Osarkon of Bubastis, 226, 228
- Osiris, Worship of, 62, 87, 169, 189, 200, 234
- Palermo Stone, 2
- Pedubast, Seheribre, 222-3
- Pedubast, Prince of Tanis, 236

INDEX

- Pemay, 222
 Pesebkhenmu I, Oekheperre,
 208-9
 Pesebkhenmu II, Hethhiqre,
 212-17
 Pesebkhenmu, Highpriest,
 211, 213-14, 218
 Peyenkhi, Highpriest, 207,
 213-14
 Peynothem, Highpriest,
 211, 213, 215-16
 Peynothem, Kheperkhere,
 208-11
 Pienkhy, Usermaere, 223-9,
 231, 232, 235
 Piop I, Meryre, 44, 51
 Piop II, Neferkere, 54-7
 Pompey, 257
 Psalms, the, 154
 Psametek I, Wahibre, 237-
 41
 Psametek II, Neferibre,
 243
 Psametek III, Enkhkenre,
 245-6
 Psimut, I-II, 250
 Ptah, Temple of, 188, 228,
 253
 Ptah-Hotpe, 46
 Ptolemy I-XVI, 255-8
 Pyramids : of Gizeh, 35-40,
 135
 — Thoser's Step-Pyramid,
 27-8, 31, 35, 41, 48, 76
 — other Pyramids, 31-2, 41,
 45, 51, 52, 76-7, 79,
 84-5
 Rameses I, Menpehtire,
 168, 186
 Rameses II, Usermaere,
 171-9, 180, 184, 186,
 187, 188, 209, 213,
 234
 Rameses III, Usermaere,
 185-90, 191-8, 207,
 209, 213, 220
 Rameses IV, Hiquaere,
 196-200
 Rameses V-IX, 200
 Rameses X, Neferkeure,
 201-2
 Rameses XI, Khepermaere,
 203
 Rameses XII, Menmaere,
 203-6, 209
 Ramesseum, the, at Thebes,
 177
 Redadef, 38-9
 Rehoboam, of Judah, 218-
 19
 Religion, 24, 34, 58, 59, 87,
 145-6, 149-64, 166, 178,
 186-90, 201, 216
 Ribaddi of Byblos, 157
 Rome, Egypt under, 257-9
 Sahure, 41-3, 44, 45
 Sanati, 91
 Sargon of Assyria, 229
 Sebni, Governor of the
 South, 55-6
 Sekhemkere, 88
 Senmut, 119, 123, 124
 Sesusri I, Kheperkere, 74-5

INDEX

- Sesusri II, Khekheperre, 77-9
 Sesusri III, Khekeure, 79-81, 139
 Setnakht, Userheure, 184, 197
 Sety I, Menmaere, 168-71, 179, 213
 Sety II, Userkheperure Merenptah, 183, 185
 Shebeke, Neferkere, 229-30, 231-4
 Shebetoke, Dedkeure, 234
 Shepenupt, Queen, 239
 Shepseskaf, 40
 Sheru, 39
 Sheshonk I, Hethkheperre, 214-16, 218-20, 231
 Sheshonk II, 221
 Sheshonk III, Usermaere, 221-2
 Sheshonk IV, Oekheperre, 222
 Sheshonk, Prince of Bubastis, 226, 235
 Siamen, Neterkheperre, 211, 215
 Sinuhe, Prince, 74-5, 86-7
 Siptah, Akhenre Merenptah, 182-3
 Sitre, Queen, 168, 179
 Smenkhkhere, 158
 Snofru, Nebmaet, 30-2, 35, 48, 80
 Sobknofru, Queen, 86
 Solomon, 211, 219, 220, 231
 Sphinx, the, 39, 135-6
 Splendour of Splendours, Temple of the, 121
 Succession, the Law of, 9, 25, 104
 Tadukhipa, Queen, 149
 Taharqa, Nefertumkhure, 233-6, 239
 Takeloth I, Usermaere, 187, 220-1
 Takeloth II, Hethkheperre, 221
 Takeloth, Highpriest, 223
 Taoue, Seqenenre, 95-7, 213
 Taruish I and II, see Darius I and II
 Tefnakhte of Sais, 225-8, 229, 232, 235
 Tell el-Amarna, 150-3, 156
 Tell el-Amarna Letters, the, 157
 Teusret, Queen, 182-3, 185
 Theamenefenk of Mendes, 226
 Theban Necropolis, 95, 99, 106, 107, 177, 212
 Thebes, Colossi of, 142
 Theher, Irmaenre, 251-2
 Thetumre, 91-2
 Thoser, 27-9, 31, 35, 41, 48, 76
 Thutmose I, Oekheperkhere, 107-12, 187
 Thutmose II, Oekheperenre, 112-15, 209, 213

INDEX

- Thutmose III, Menkhe-
perre, 115, 117-31, 132,
141, 161, 171, 213, 242
- Thutmose IV, Menkhe-
perure, 134-9, 145, 214
- Tiglath-Pileser III of
Assyria, 223
- Tiy, Queen, 139, 141, 142,
144-7, 156, 160, 163
- Toe, Queen, 133
- Tontamen, Bekere, 236
- Tontimaeos, see Thetumre
- Toti, 49-51
- Totisheri, Queen, 103, 104
- Turin Papyrus, 6
- Tutenkhamen, Nebkhe-
perure, 158-62, 214
- Tuthmosis, see Thutmose
- Ugef, Khetouire, 88
- Uni, 52-3
- Unnos, 47-8, 49
- Userkef, Nebkhey, 41
- Userkere Ity, 51
- Valley of the Tombs of the
Kings, 111, 115, 121,
131, 133-4, 147, 156,
160, 162, 168, 170, 179,
182, 183, 200, 203, 209,
212-14
- Wenammon, 182-3
- Xerxes of Persia (Khshershe), 249
- Yapakhal, Merusrre, 91
- Zedekiah of Judah, 243



